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THE DISCOVERY
OF THE
OLD NORTHWEST
AND ITS
SETTLEMENT BY THE FRENCH

BY
JAMES BALDWIN



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DISC OLD NORTHWEST.

M. B. C. I

PREFACE

WHILE every American is familiar with the events connected with the discovery and colonization of the eastern shores of our country, the history of the Old Northwest—that magnificent section of our country lying west of the Alleghanies and bounded by the Mississippi, the Ohio, and the Great Lakes—is comparatively unknown. It has a history as varied, as interesting, and as important as that of any other portion of the North American continent, and yet few persons realize the extent to which the events attending its early exploration, its conquest, and its settlement have determined the destiny of our country as a whole.

So far as is known to the writer, no attempt has hitherto been made to relate the story of these events in a connected order, free from extraneous details and adapted to the comprehension and tastes of younger readers. Parkman, in his monumental series of historical narratives, has told this story in connection with many others having but slight relation to the Old Northwest; Justin Winsor, in his very scholarly volumes relating to the French régime in America, has done the same. But the works of these writers are too voluminous for general readers, and being designed for mature thinkers they fail to be attractive to the majority of young people just beginning to acquire a taste for historical reading. The author of this volume,

while indebted to Winsor and Parkman and many other writers for the facts which he relates, has followed his own method of telling the story, keeping always in mind as the central thought the discovery and development of the Old Northwest and its final conquest for freedom and civilization.

He has not attempted a complete history, but rather a connected series of sketches, selecting from the very large number of events and incidents that might have been related those which seemed to him most necessary to the interest and the continuous unfolding of the narrative. It is confidently believed that young readers of these sketches will rise from their perusal with some new conceptions of the history of our country, and especially of that portion of it which seems destined to be — if it is not already — the “commanding field whence men and institutions will communicate their will to the nation.”

CONTENTS

HOW THE GREAT LAKES WERE DISCOVERED

	PAGE
THE FIRST APPROACH	
I. Jacques Cartier	11
II. Hochelaga	14
III. Mont Royal	18
THE CLOSED GATEWAY	
I. Samuel de Champlain	22
II. Iroquois and Hurons	28
III. The Beginning of a Long Struggle	32
IV. Étienne Brulé	35
V. The Fur Traders	39
VI. Place Royale	41
AN IMAGINARY DISCOVERER	
I. Ambitious Dreams	44
II. The Talk of Paris	46
III. The Ascent of the Ottawa	48
IV. The Tabagie at Chief Tessouat's	51
THE FIRST OF THE GREAT LAKES	
I. A Brother of the Récollets	56
II. The Wilderness Way	59
III. The Mer Douce of the Hurons	61
THE SECOND OF THE GREAT LAKES	
I. The Treaty with the Hurons	64
II. Ototiacha	67

	PAGE
III. The Discovery of Lake Ontario	71
IV. The Raid upon the Iroquois	73

THE THIRD OF THE GREAT LAKES

I. The Young Man from Normandy	76
II. The Scouts of the Wilderness	80
III. The Governor's Commission	84
IV. The Discovery of Lake Michigan	85
V. The Men of the Fetid Sea	88
VI. The "Father of Waters"	92

THE JESUIT MISSIONARIES

I. The Residence of Sainte Marie	96
II. The Sault Sainte Marie	99
III. The Captivity of Father Jogues	102
IV. The Dispersion of the Hurons	106

THE FOURTH OF THE GREAT LAKES

I. Two Daring Fur Traders	109
II. The Manitou of the Copper Mines	121

THE FIFTH OF THE GREAT LAKES

I. The Hidden Water	124
II. Louis Joliet	125
III. The First Voyagers on Lake Erie	127
IV. A Remarkable Meeting	129

HOW THE GREAT RIVERS WERE EXPLORED

THE BEAUTIFUL RIVER

I. La Salle	131
II. La Chine	133
III. La Belle Rivière	137

ON THE UPPER LAKES

I. Ménard	141
II. Allouez	146
III. Marquette	149
IV. St. Esprit	151
V. Dollier and Galinée	153
VI. St. Ignace	156
VII. Saint-Lusson	157

THE HIDDEN RIVER

I. The Explorer and the Missionary	161
II. The Fox and the Wisconsin	164
III. The Voyage	168
IV. The Return	175
V. The Mission of the Illinois	177

FROM CATARAQUI TO CRÈVECŒUR

I. Cataraqui	181
II. Fort Frontenac	184
III. Niagara	187
IV. The Griffon	192
V. The St. Joseph	195
VI. The Kankakee	197
VII. Crèvecœur	198

THE UPPER MISSISSIPPI

I. Accault and Hennepin	204
II. The Sioux	205
III. The Captives	209
IV. The Grand Hunt	212
V. Duluth	215
VI. Tonty and Membré	218

TO THE GREAT RIVER'S MOUTH

I. At Fort Miami	222
II. From Fort Frontenac to Natchez	224
III. Louisiana	227

LA SALLE'S LAST ENTERPRISE

I. Fort St. Louis on the Illinois	230
II. The Lost Colony	232
III. The End of a Great Life	234

HOW THE FIRST SETTLEMENTS WERE MADE

FRENCH LIFE IN THE NORTHWEST

I. The Settlements	237
II. The Settlers	240
III. The Christian Indians	244
IV. A Day in a French Village	245

THE POSTS ON THE LAKES

I. Mackinac	247
II. Detroit	248

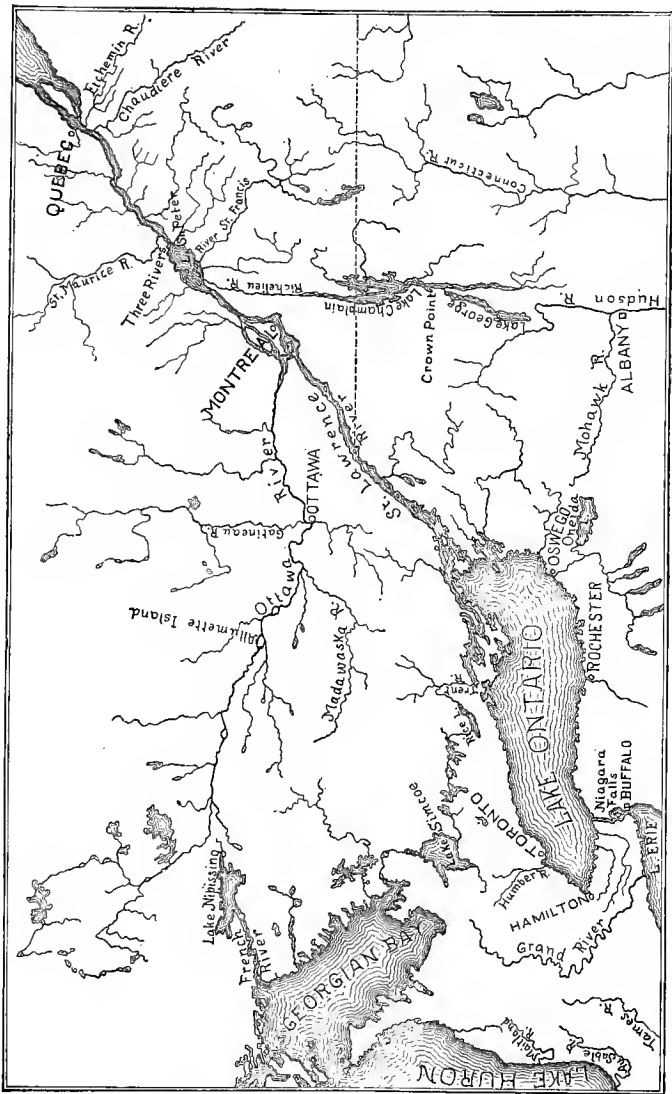
THE FIREBRANDS OF THE WEST

I. The Fight at Detroit	251
II. The Little Hill of the Dead	258
III. The Quenching of the Firebrands	260

AFTER WORD	262
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INDEX	267
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THE DISCOVERY
OF
THE OLD NORTHWEST



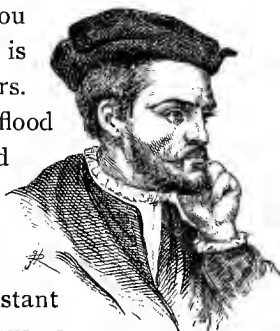
Map to illustrate the first Approaches to the Great Lakes and the Old Northwest.

HOW THE GREAT LAKES WERE DISCOVERED

THE FIRST APPROACH

I. JACQUES CARTIER

IF you look at the map of Canada you will see that the city of Montreal is at the meeting place of two great rivers. From the southwest comes the mighty flood of the St. Lawrence, smooth and placid above, then rushing down rocky and dangerous rapids, and here expanding into a small but beautiful bay before proceeding on its majestic way to the distant sea. From the west comes the Ottawa, a smaller stream, which, before losing itself in the St. Lawrence, divides into several channels, thus enclosing on three sides the Island of Montreal.



Jacques Cartier

To this place, somewhat more than three hundred and
1535 fifty years ago, there came a party of Frenchmen with their leader, Jacques Cartier. They were the first white men that had ever sailed up the broad current of the St. Lawrence. Cartier had been sent out by the king of France to discover new lands

and, if possible, find a water way through which ships might sail westward from the Atlantic Ocean to the South Sea, as people then called the Pacific. He had discovered

and named the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and afterwards, leaving his largest vessels in a safe harbor, had gone on with a single ship to explore the broad, mysterious river whose sources were hidden in the western wilderness. No one at that time imagined that the continent of North America was very broad even at its broadest part; and Cartier fondly hoped that this stream was the water way which he sought.



"He had gone on
with a single ship"

Some time before reaching the place where the Ottawa joins the St. Lawrence, the ship ran into shallow water and was grounded. But Cartier was in no mind to give up his venture. He ordered the boats to be launched, and in these the company pushed onward up the river — now threading their way through a maze of wooded islands, now hesitating whether to follow the right hand channel or the left, and at last emerging into a broad expanse of smooth water with timbered shores stretching far on either side.

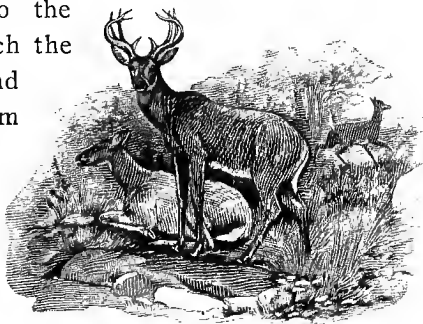
The whole country seemed like a fairyland. The time was autumn, and the sun shone dimly through the smoky

haze that filled the air. The early frost had already touched the leaves and changed their green to garnet and crimson and gold. The nuts were falling, and the vines which trailed over bush and tree and hung in festoons down to the water's edge were loaded with clusters of purplish grapes. Squirrels frisked among the branches, and wild deer cropped the herbage in the open glades; blackbirds and thrushes scolded in the thickets, and water-fowl of various kinds swam in the creeks and sheltered inlets.

And now among the trees on their right the Frenchmen saw scores of Indians running. With signs of friendship the savages beckoned to the white strangers to approach the shore, and with songs and dancing they welcomed them to their woodland home.

That night. Jacques Cartier and his men encamped on the beach of the island now known as the Island of Montreal.

Along the river banks and among the trees bonfires were blazing, and in the light of these the Indians danced and rejoiced. They thought that the Frenchmen were superior beings from another world, and they hailed their coming as the beginning of new and happier times—times foretold by their wise men, when there should be no more toil nor sickness nor pain.

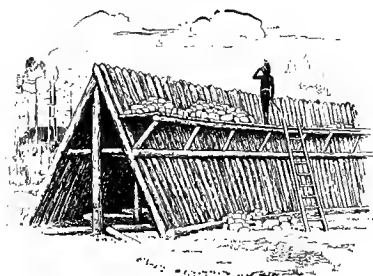


“Wild deer cropped the herbage”

II. HOCHELAGA

Early on the following morning Cartier and his companions set out to visit the Indian town of Hochelaga,

which stood near the center of the island. The fame of this town was known among the Indians far and near, and Cartier had heard of its grandeur while still hundreds of miles down the river. Guided by the glad natives, and following a path through the thick woods, the French-

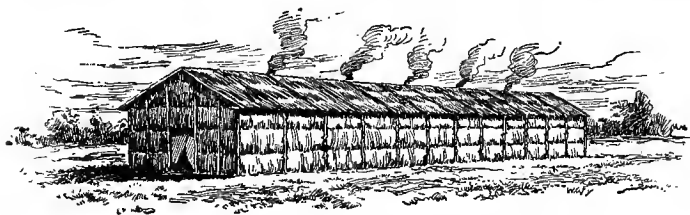


"These palisades were of logs"

men soon came to a broad clearing in which were fields of ripened corn; and beyond these were other fields where the ground was covered with green and yellow pumpkins, emblems of peace and plenty.

Having passed around to the farther side of the clearing, they found themselves in front of the tall palisades that encircled the homes of the Indians. These palisades were of logs set on end and ranged in three parallel rows three or four feet apart. Those of the middle row stood upright; but those of the outer and inner rows were leaned towards each other until their tops met and sometimes overlapped. Along the inside of this strange wall were strong platforms, or scaffolds, on which were piles of stones and other missiles ready to be hurled down upon the heads of any foes that might approach too near or try to scale the palisades.

Passing through a narrow gateway, the Frenchmen entered the village. Here were about fifty houses, built in the strange, rude fashion common among the natives of that region. Each house was more than a hundred feet in length, and at least forty feet in width. It was built of poles, and covered and weatherboarded with sheets of



“ Each house was more than a hundred feet in length ”

bark. The roof was quite low and had many openings, under each of which was a place for a fire. Each fireplace was the center of a home, and therefore the number of families in a house was always the same as the number of holes in the roof.

Jacques Cartier and his men were led to the center of this strange village, where there was a kind of public square. And now the women and children came running from the houses, with wondering looks and cries of pleasure, to welcome the white strangers. They seemed not at all afraid, but filled with delight, as at the coming of well-known and long expected friends. They gazed curiously at the Frenchmen's weapons and their brilliant armor. They touched the beard, the hair, the cheeks of Cartier, as if to make sure that it was not all a dream. Then they brought mats which they spread upon the ground,

and the strangers were asked to sit down in the presence of the chief of the nation.

This chief was very old and so helpless that he had to be carried on a litter of deerskins by four of his most trusted men. With signs and gestures he welcomed the strangers to Hochelaga ; and then he made a short speech



“ They seemed not at all afraid ”.

which seemed very eloquent and very earnest, but which the Frenchmen could not understand. In closing he pointed to his helpless, shrunken limbs, as if imploring aid, and spoke in piteous tones as though praying to be healed by the white man's touch.

What could Cartier do but humor the fancy of the poor old savage? He laid his hands upon him ; he touched his legs, his feet ; he stroked his long, thin hair. Then he

spoke of a Healer greater than himself who had gone about curing the sick and giving sight to the blind and raising the dead. The old chief understood not a word, but his face beamed with hope, and his lips moved as if expressing thanks. Then he gave to Cartier a little coronet of red-dyed porcupine quills which he had worn upon his head as a sign of power. It was the gift of a reverent and grateful heart.

Soon from all the houses others came to be cured. The sick, the lame, the blind were led and carried to the spot where the wonderful white man sat. It was a pitiable throng — but all were happy because they believed that a god had come to heal them of their infirmities. The heart of the French captain was deeply moved, and he could not tell them of their mistake. As each one was brought before him he touched the diseased part and made the sign of the cross. Then he uttered a prayer for their benighted souls, and dismissed them with his blessing. The poor savages said not a word, but, with awe in their hearts, looked their grateful thanks to the strange being who was showing them so great kindness.

When all the feeble and sick had been disposed of, Cartier caused presents to be distributed freely. To the men he gave knives and hatchets; to the women he gave beads and pewter rings; and among the children he flung small pictures and images, and bright bits of colored glass. Then, to the great astonishment of the natives, the French buglers blew their horns, and strains of music such as had never before been heard in that wild land rose above the palisades and floated out over the fields,

and were echoed back from the woods and hills. The white strangers rose from their seats, and, following the lead of their captain, marched in military order through the village and out of the inclosure by the same gate through which they had entered.

It had been the greatest day ever known in Hochelaga, and the people were loath to see their visitors depart. The women followed them to the gate and pressed upon them gifts of fish and corn and other food more than they could carry. The men also followed, nor did they turn back so soon. They wanted to serve the strangers, and do them further honor by showing them the greatness and beauty of the land in which they lived.

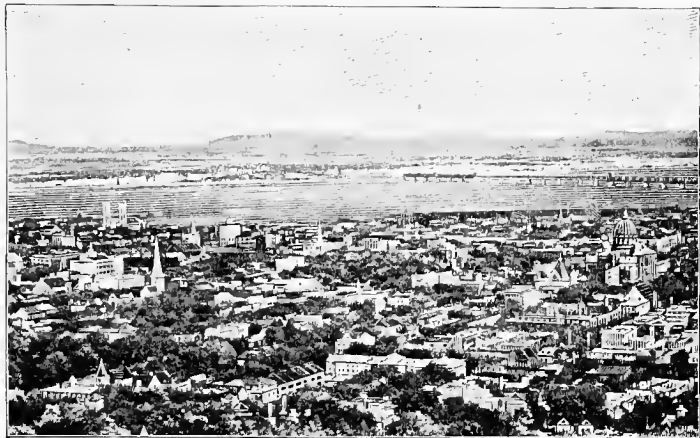
III. MONT ROYAL

On the side of the village opposite the cornfields there was a lofty hill, the wooded slopes of which were gay with all the colors which autumn foliage bears. It seemed so much higher than the surrounding country that Jacques Cartier wondered whether he might not from the top of it catch sight of the great western ocean—the South Sea which the Spaniard, Balboa, twenty years before, had beheld from the peaks of Darien. He asked the Indians about it, but they could not understand. Nevertheless, they showed him the easiest path up the steep and rocky slope, and would even have carried him over the roughest places.

As Cartier climbed up, step by step, he was charmed by the wild beauty of the hill itself no less than by the ever widening landscape that opened to his view.

"This," said he, "is truly a royal mountain, a kingly landmark in the midst of the new and vast domain that I have added to the Crown of France. Its name shall be Mont Royal."

And Mont Royal (Mont Réal) it is still called; and the noble city, which now stands where then were Indian



"The noble city . . . where then were Indian cornfields"

cornfields and the forest red with autumn leaves, is known by the same name — Montreal.

When, at last, after much climbing, Cartier reached the top of the mountain, a wonderful vision met his gaze. Looking eagerly toward the west he saw no sign of the vast sea which was the chief object of his thoughts; but, far as eye could reach, he beheld a succession of forest plains and wooded hills stretching away and away until they seemed to meet and mingle with the hazy sky.

Directly in front of him, but miles away, he saw the St. Lawrence emerging, as it were, from the mysterious West, and then, as it approached, broadening into the beautiful expanse since known as Lake St. Louis, from which, suddenly narrowing, it dashed in an impetuous flood down the rapids, called in later years Lachine. Then, very near upon his left, Cartier saw the same river spreading out into a quiet bay, its waters gleaming like a mirror in the autumn sunlight, while his own boats lay moored to the nearest shore. Turning a little to the right, he caught glimpses of the Ottawa, now expanding into beautiful lakes, now dashing over rocky rapids and losing itself in winding channels among overhanging trees, and at last pouring its flood of waters into the St. Lawrence.

Of the strange secrets hidden in the wilderness before him, Jacques Cartier could never have dreamed. He could not have guessed that the far solitudes towards which his eyes were directed would in time become the home of millions of happy people. No fancy of his could have whispered that just beyond his line of vision were fresh-water lakes larger than half the kingdom of France, and that upon their shores would spring up cities greater than any he had ever seen. That he was still more than two thousand miles from the object of his quest, the great western ocean, he could by no means have imagined. But west, north, east, south,—farther than eye could pierce,—the same riddle presented itself of woods and hills and silent wastes, and the hazy sky dome bending over all. He was indeed in the midst of an unknown land. From the Gulf of Mexico to the

northern seas there was not one spot where a white man had his dwelling; indeed, the men who were to make the earliest settlements in that region were not yet born.

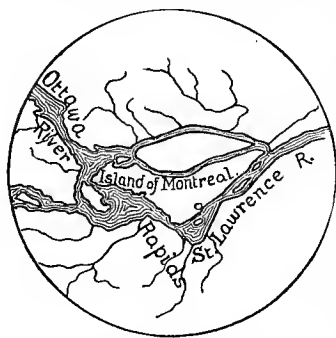
When Jacques Cartier at last descended from the royal mount, and, with his men, returned to the boats, he had given up the thought of finding there an easy passage through the continent. To venture farther up the St. Lawrence was clearly impossible; for what vessel could stem its turbulent rapids? To ascend the Ottawa might be easier, but this would most likely lead the voyager only deeper and deeper into the wilderness. So, bidding good-bye to the simple-hearted natives who watched them from the shore, the Frenchmen turned their boats downstream, and, aided by the current, soon reached the ships that were waiting for them in the safe harbor far below. They had not discovered a passage to the South Sea; but they had penetrated the continent farther than any other Europeans had yet ventured, and in the name of the king of France they had taken possession of an unknown country which might yet become the source of measureless wealth and power.

The region known to us as the Old Northwest, with its countless lakes and streams and its trackless woods and prairies, was still untrodden by the feet of civilized man; but Jacques Cartier, without knowing it, had visited the gateway by which it was to be approached from the east, and from the top of Mont Royal he had seen on the distant horizon the faint lines that marked a portion of its boundary.

THE CLOSED GATEWAY

I. SAMUEL DE CHAMPLAIN

IT was a long time before the island at the meeting of the rivers was again visited by white men. In the meanwhile many changes took place both in the Old

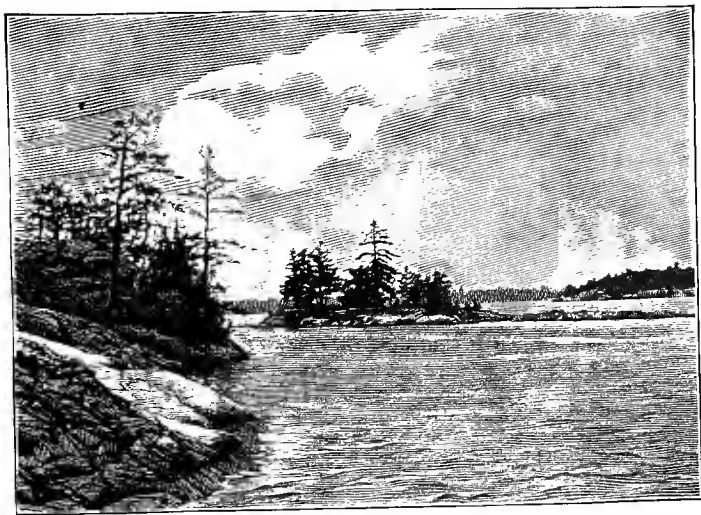


World and in the New. In France the king and his courtiers had so much to do to keep crown and country from falling into the hands of their enemies that they had no time to think of lands and peoples beyond the sea; and so the discoveries of Jacques Cartier were almost

forgotten. In the wilderness by the St. Lawrence tragedy upon tragedy had been enacted. The feeble old chief at Hochelaga had died and been forgotten; and younger chiefs had grown up and become aged in the shadow of Mont Royal. Then dreadful days had dawned. The woods and river banks rang, time and again, with the whoops of savage foes, and the waters were reddened with the blood of the slain. The cornfields were overrun and trodden down by fighting warriors; the strong palisades were overturned and the village was taken by

storm; the long houses were pillaged and burned; the island echoed with the groans of the dying, the shrieks of captive women and children, and the shouts and jeers of the pitiless victors.

Then, for many years, there was silence and solitude. Dense thickets of underbrush grew up where the village



View on the St. Lawrence

had stood, and thorns and briars flourished where the corn had rustled and grown ripe in the autumn sun. Wolves hunted among the trees, and bears sunned themselves on the river's bank; and no savage huntsman ever disturbed them or made them afraid. No sounds were heard save those of wildest nature, the chattering of squirrels, the cries of waterfowls, the twittering of birds,

and now and then the fierce growl of some beast of prey or the scream of its helpless victim.

Sixty-eight years passed, and then on a certain day in early summer another ship of France sailed up the St.

1603 Lawrence, and another party of French explorers

appeared at the meeting place of the two rivers, at the closed gateway to the great Northwest.

The leader of this party was Samuel de Champlain, a gentleman of Saintonge in the west of France. He had

been a captain in the royal navy, and had done some brave deeds in the service of his master, King Henry the Fourth. More lately he had commanded a Spanish vessel on the high seas, and had made a voyage of adventure to the West Indies and the coast of Mexico. And now, still young and ambitious, he had come to carry into these new lands on the St. Lawrence the banner of the French king and the cross of the

Catholic faith. It was his wish to do more. He fondly hoped that, by exploring the great water courses of New France, as the country was called, he might accomplish that which Cartier had failed to do, and discover the long-sought northern passage to the western ocean.

Champlain and his companions landed on the Island of Montreal, but they received no such welcome as that with which Jacques Cartier had been greeted. From river to river there was no sign of human life. Nothing remained to show that the place had ever been visited by man. Climbing to the top of Mont Royal, the Frenchmen



Champlain

scanned the country far and near, but only the great forest and the rivers and the distant hills could they discover.

The next day they explored the shore to the point where the river, coming down from the west, makes an elbow turn to the north. There they found themselves at the foot of the turbulent rapids which had deterred Cartier from proceeding farther. Surely no vessel, not even the stanchest boat, could ever make its way against the wild torrent which leaped and foamed down this long and rough incline. The wished-for and long-dreamed-of water route to the South Sea was plainly not through this dangerous and impassable channel.

At the foot of the great rapids Champlain met a small party of Indians who had come there to catch fish. They were gruff, silent fellows, half afraid of the white strangers and yet inclined to be friendly. Some of them had been among the French traders near the mouth of the St. Lawrence, and were able to understand a few simple words when spoken to. From them Champlain tried to learn something about the country through which the two great rivers flowed, and whether the sources of these streams were near the western ocean. These Indians, however, could not tell him much. They knew but very little, and since they could speak French no better than he could speak their tongue, his curiosity was only whetted by the few vague facts that he could learn from them.

One day the chief of the band visited Champlain on board of his vessel. The Frenchman, by signs and such words as they knew in common, urged him to tell all that

he knew about the great river. How far was it to the head of these rapids? Was the current above them smooth or swift? Was the stream wide or narrow? From what place did all this flood of waters come?

The Indian told him that there were many rapids in the St. Lawrence, and that, after passing them all, one would come to a lake in which there were many islands. At the end of this lake there was a high waterfall around which a canoe might be carried to a smaller lake beyond. This lake was sixty leagues in length, and the water was fresh and sweet. It opened at its farther extremity into a short but very broad river through which one might pass into a much greater lake. "But," said he, "none of my people have ever visited that lake, and no man living has seen its farther shore."

Then he took a piece of charcoal and drew a rude map on the deck. He showed how the stream, above the rapids, was very wide, forming what is now called Lake St. Louis, and how it there receives the main part of the Ottawa. Then, by a few rough strokes, he showed other rapids and other wide expanses, and again still more rapids.

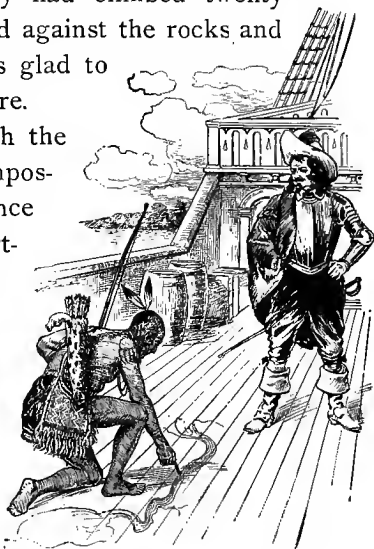
"Great fall! Very great fall!" he said, making a heavy black line. And finally, with a flourish of the charcoal, he exclaimed, "Great water! Very great water!" and strode away as having no more to say.

Champlain believed that the distant lake of which the savage had spoken was connected with the western ocean, and he half resolved to push forward. He thought that if he could only make his way to the head of the first rapids, he might succeed equally well with those above

and at last reach the source of the mysterious river, and discover the "great water" beyond. A light skiff was made ready for the dangerous ascent, and strong Indians with poles and paddles undertook to guide it against the rushing flood. But before they had climbed twenty yards the frail vessel was dashed against the rocks and overturned, and Champlain was glad to escape with his life to the shore.

He now saw clearly that with the means at his command it was impossible to ascend the St. Lawrence farther. He felt that by reporting the matter promptly to his friends and the king, he might be permitted to lead thither another expedition better prepared to overcome the difficulties that were in the way. And so, without doing more than take note of the place best suited for a fort or trading post, the French captain turned his vessel about and sailed for France.

He was now more anxious than ever to renew his quest of a northern passage to the Pacific Ocean. He wished also to establish settlements on the St. Lawrence, and open up trade with the natives; for he had found that the country was not so poor and profitless a place as had been supposed. While slowly making his way up the river, he had taken pains to secure the friendship of the



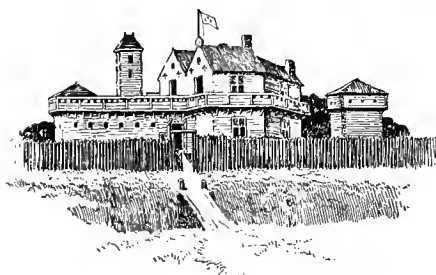
"A rude map on the deck"

Indians through whose hunting grounds it flowed. These often brought to the ship the furry hides of wild animals, — of beavers, foxes, otters, and lynxes, — and were glad to barter them for knives, hatchets, and trinkets. Why might not this trade in furs be developed into a great industry? Why might not the pathless forest be made to yield wealth greater even than that derived from the mines of Mexico and Peru?

It was with thoughts such as these that Champlain presented himself at the court of the French king, and with patient argument tried to arouse among the wealthy nobles some kind of active interest in his scheme of exploration.

II. IROQUOIS AND HURONS

For five years Champlain was obliged to direct his energies toward other projects of discovery and colonization.



“Strong blockhouses were built”

At length, however, fortune favored him, and he again sailed into the St. Lawrence, this time prepared to do more than make a merely passing visit. But he stopped far short of the Island of Montreal. He had

decided to build a fort and trading post at the point since called Quebec; and for many busy months he was occupied in that task. Near the site of the present market place of

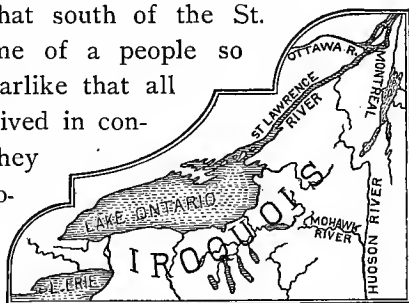
the lower town of Quebec, strong blockhouses were built, tall palisades were erected, and the whole was surrounded by a deep moat. At last, when all had been made secure, and the soldiers and traders were rejoicing over their work, Champlain felt that the time had come for him to continue the explorations which had so long been interrupted.

In the meanwhile he had taken pains to learn all that he could about the savages into whose country he had come. He was told that south of the St.

Lawrence was the home of a people so fierce and cruel and warlike that all the surrounding tribes lived in constant dread of them. They

called themselves the Hudenosaunee, or People of the Long House.

They lived as five



great families, and they compared their country to one vast house with five fires blazing in it, and a thousand warriors dancing around each fire. The French afterward called these Indians the Iroquois, from their habit of ending every important statement with the word "Iro," which means, "I have said it." It is by this name that they are generally known in history; and it is by this name that we shall call them. Their five great families were really five united tribes — the Mohawks, the Oneidas, the Onondagas, the Cayugas, and the Senecas; and for this reason the English in later years called them the "Five Nations." Their country included all of northern

and middle New York, extending east and west from the Hudson to the Genesee.

Champlain learned also that, far to the west of the Island of Montreal, there lived another nation, less warlike and cruel, who called themselves Ouendats. They were kinsmen of the People of the Long House, but



A Huron

between the two nations there was undying hatred; and many and bloody were the battles that had been fought, sometimes in the land of the Iroquois and sometimes in that of the Ouendats. Like the Iroquois, the Ouendats lived in villages, each village containing a number of long houses, and each house having several fireplaces. The French people who came with Champlain called them, not Ouendats, but Hurons, because of the grotesque manner in which they wore their hair—the French word *hure* meaning “shock-head.” The descendants

of these Hurons are now called Wyandots, the name being merely an English variation of the old word Ouendats.

Between the two rival nations—the Iroquois and the Hurons—lived many scattered tribes, speaking languages somewhat alike, and claiming some sort of distant kinship. But they were, for the most part, strangers to one another, each tribe living to itself and defending itself as best it could against their common foe, the dreaded Iroquois. They did not dwell in long houses, but each family

had its own rude wigwam, built of poles and bark, and many of them had no settled homes. Among the first of these people to make friends with the French were some bands who lived in the woods far up the Ottawa and called themselves Algonquins; and this name soon came to be used by both English and French to designate almost any Indians who were neither Hurons nor Iroquois.

In the autumn of 1608 there came to the newly built fort at Quebec a young chief from the banks of the Ottawa. He was filled with wonder at what he saw there, and was eager to make a treaty of friendship with Champlain. Would not the great white chief help his tribe in the war which they were waging against the Iroquois? In return for such service, he promised the friendship, not only of his Algonquin tribe and kinsmen, but also that of the remote Ouendats, or Hurons; and he assured Champlain that when they had once beaten the Iroquois in battle he would guide him to the upper waters of the Ottawa, whence there was no doubt that he could easily reach the great western water beyond.

Champlain was very willing to make a treaty with this Ottawa chief. He thought that, by giving his aid to the tribes unfriendly to the Iroquois, he might subdue those warlike savages, of whose power he knew so little, and at the same time secure the friendship of the Hurons, whose help would be of the greatest value to him in his exploration of the west. Pledges were therefore exchanged. The young chief promised that, with the opening of spring, he would bring a host of warriors and

a fleet of canoes down the St. Lawrence to Quebec; and Champlain promised that he would give the Algonquins every possible aid, and accompany them in their descent upon the enemy's country. The matter being thus arranged, the chief hurried home to tell his people of the league which he had made with the French captain, and to prepare his young braves for the war path.

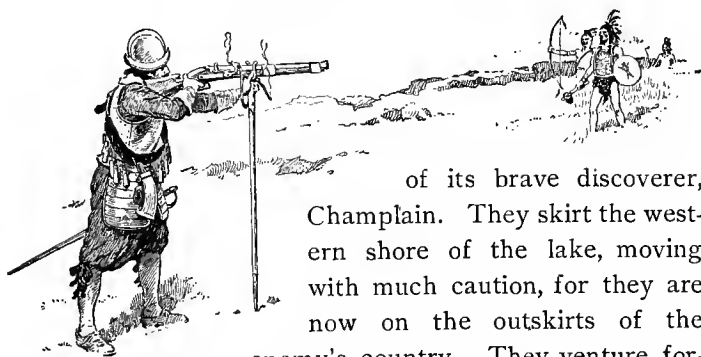
III. THE BEGINNING OF A LONG STRUGGLE

And so, in the early spring we hear of Champlain at the head of a dusky war party that is stealthily making its way by water southward into the land of the
1609 Iroquois. The party is chiefly composed of half-naked savages from the north and west—Montagnais Indians from the neighborhood of Quebec, Algonquins, Ottawas from the distant river that still bears their name, and a few Hurons from the heart of the unknown wilderness beyond. With them, besides Champlain, are eleven Frenchmen armed with arquebuses—weapons at once mysterious and terrible to the savages, who know nothing of gunpowder, and carry only bows and arrows, stone hatchets, and stone-pointed lances.

From Quebec they paddle up the St. Lawrence to the mouth of the stream since known as the river Sorel, or Richelieu. Then into this smaller stream they turn their canoes, and, facing the noonday sun, they move steadily onward, now gliding silently over long stretches of placid water, and now forcing their way through swirling rapids or against the steady flow of the deeper currents. The

savages are pleased with the wildness of the woods on either hand; they grow tired of the labor of paddling, and go ashore to rest and have a feast. They quarrel, and most of them return to their homes, glad of an excuse to avoid a meeting with the Iroquois. Sixty warriors with twenty-four canoes remain faithful and continue the journey, led by Champlain and two of his Frenchmen.

Soon, to the great joy of all, they enter the beautiful lake which is to bear through all coming ages the name



of its brave discoverer, Champlain. They skirt the western shore of the lake, moving with much caution, for they are now on the outskirts of the enemy's country. They venture forward only at night, lying hidden among the trees during the day. The bravest of the Ottawas tremble secretly at the thought of a contest with the fierce warriors of the Long House.

At length, near the place afterward known as Crown Point, they are discovered by a band of Iroquois, and both parties prepare for battle. There are some two hundred of the enemy, — tall, strong men, the fiercest warriors in all America, — and the boastful invaders from the St. Lawrence have good reason to fear. But now Champlain

advances, clad in glittering armor, his arquebus in his hand. The lords of the forest pause in wonder, for this is their first sight of a white man. He takes aim with his arquebus; there is a flash, a sound like thunder, and an Iroquois chief falls dead. For a moment the astonished warriors stand their ground, and send a shower of arrows toward their foes. Then comes the sound of another gunshot, and another chief tumbles to the ground. Terror fills the hearts of men who have never before felt fear, and the Iroquois flee in dismay.

It is a great victory; but the delighted Ottawas and Hurons are in no mind to go farther into the enemy's country. They hasten home to boast of their brave deeds and amuse themselves by torturing their prisoners. Champlain can do nothing but return to his new fortress at Quebec, there to plan other expeditions into the wilderness. He little thinks of the consequences that will follow his great victory. He does not know that on account of their bitter humiliation the Iroquois will henceforth cherish an undying hatred toward the French. Had he made friends with them instead of exciting their wrath, he might have opened to the French all the country south of the St. Lawrence and found an easy way of access to the Hudson River and the Atlantic; and in such case the whole history of America would have been changed. But now the fierce People of the Long House will stand like an impassable wall to oppose any southward movement; they will barricade the shortest way to the western lakes, and for a hundred years they will dispute with the French the possession of the forests and streams of the interior.

IV. ÉTIENNE BRULÉ

From his Indian allies Champlain had heard vague stories of the "great water" in the West, and his dream of discovering a passage to the South Sea was revived. He had also an eye to trade and profit in this vast territory which Jacques Cartier's discovery had given to France. The Hurons had told him of a land where the rocks were of pure copper; the Ottawas had spoken of forests where fur-bearing animals waited only for the trapper and the trader. Here, then, was a land full of golden promises, offering rich rewards to the person that should explore it and help to develop its resources. But Champlain needed men and ships before he could accomplish more, and in the hope of procuring them he hastened to make another visit to France.

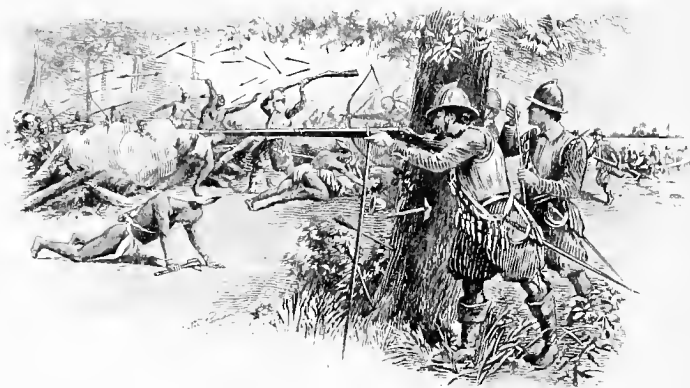
Early in the following spring the brave captain was again at Quebec, with stores for his little colony, but without the aid which he had hoped to obtain for his western enterprise. Soon there came chiefs from the Hurons and the Ottawas and other Algonquin tribes repeating their story of wrongs suffered from the Iroquois.

"Do but help us destroy these enemies of ours," they said, "and we will lead you to the great water, we will be your brothers, we will help you to everything you wish."

Another campaign was therefore planned against the common enemy, and in June another fleet of canoes with a host of savage warriors was making its way toward the

haunts of the Iroquois. Champlain and four French soldiers armed with arquebuses were in the van, and to them the Indians looked for victory.

The war party had scarcely reached the mouth of the Richelieu when they encountered a band of Iroquois intrenched behind a barricade of trees. A terrible battle followed, and the end would have been defeat had not a boat load of French fur traders arrived just in time to save



“ The dreadful fire of the arquebuses ”

the day. The Iroquois were not able to stand against the dreadful fire of the arquebuses, and were finally forced to retreat, leaving more than half of their party dead on the field, or prisoners in the hands of their foes.

As in the previous campaign, the savages had no thought of following up their success. One such victory was enough for one year. Hurons and Ottawas loaded their canoes with prisoners and scalps and other battle

trophies, and made ready to return at once to their villages and hunting grounds. Champlain would have gone with them had not his duties forbidden. He was anxious to see the Hurons in their homes, and, above all, to discover the great water which was said to border their country on the west; but this was now impossible. He cast about him to learn if any man in his company was willing to undertake the long and perilous journey, living the life of a savage, for the sake of spying out the secrets of the wilderness. Not one was brave enough.

But young Étienne Brulé, whom Champlain had brought with him as a servant from France, said, "Let me go, master. I am not afraid."

"What! You, Étienne?"

"Yes. I will go home with the Hurons and live with them until you send for me. I will see all the country that I can. I will learn their language. I will make myself used to their way of living, and be as much of a savage as any of them."

"Étienne, I am proud of you," said Champlain. "You will be worth more to me than a dozen men. You shall do as you say."

The Indians refused at first to take the lad. "What if our poor fare and hard life should disagree with him and he should die? The white chief will blame us for it and make war upon us."

"True," answered Champlain, "if you should be unkind to the boy or harm him purposely I would surely punish you. But I know that you will take good care of him and treat him kindly, and I trust him wholly to you."

In the end the savages agreed to take young Brulé with them on condition that one of their own young men might go with Champlain and remain with him until the following summer. And so the exchange was made. Étienne Brulé was placed in the care of an Algonquin chief whose name was Iroquet and who promised to teach the lad the language and the lore of his nation. A young Huron was given to Champlain as a hostage and a pledge for the fair treatment of Brulé; and each party promised the other that when the days were again at their longest they would meet on the Island of Montreal below the great rapids of the St. Lawrence.

Étienne Brulé embarked in the canoe of his friend Iroquet and was soon speeding joyfully away toward the home of the Algonquins. He was the first white person to pass beyond the gateway overlooked by Mont Royal, ascend the Ottawa, and visit the vast forest region in the country of the Great Lakes.

As for the young Indian who went with Champlain he was bright and quick, and soon became much attached to his master. He was given the name of Savignon, and was taken not only to Quebec but soon afterward to France. What a wonderful world it must have been to his savage mind as he walked the streets of Paris, or stood in the king's palace to be gazed at by the lords and ladies of the court!

"Well, Monsieur de Champlain," asked his friends, "what have you accomplished by this last voyage?"

Surely, what had he accomplished? He had struck another blow, inflicted another indignity, upon the proud

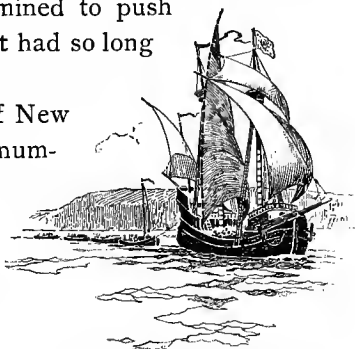
Iroquois ; and in doing this he had deepened the hatred of that people toward the French, and had caused the laying up of wrath the consequences of which would endure for more than a century to come. Had he not accomplished enough ?

V. THE FUR TRADERS

Champlain was not the man to give way to discouragement, and besides he remembered the promise he had given his savage friends to meet them in the early summer at the foot of the great rapids. 1611

In May he was again sailing up the St. Lawrence. He stopped for only a brief visit with the little garrison of Quebec, for he was now determined to push onward to the western goal that had so long tempted him.

Stories of the great wealth of New France had already brought a number of adventurers to the St. Lawrence, and the little post of Quebec was the center of an active trade with the Indians. As Champlain's vessel made its way up the river it was followed by thir-



“ Followed by thirteen boats ”

teen boats loaded with fur traders and their goods — hatchets, kettles, knives, and trinkets. The news of their coming had already been carried to the tribes on the Ottawa and to the Hurons by the mysterious western water. Iroquet and his Algonquin followers had been

busy all winter, collecting furs and getting ready for the expected meeting with the great white chief and his men.

Several days before the appointed time, the ship cast anchor in the broad stream close to the Island of Montreal. Sailors and traders went on shore, and a busy scene followed, such as Mont Royal had never before looked down upon. The Indians, eager for trade, were already there in great numbers. They had come in their light canoes, loaded with furs from the forest. Some had reached the place by the lower channel of the Ottawa; but most had preferred the upper passage, and, crossing the lake of St. Louis, had shot boldly down the long rapids with a dexterity and daring very astonishing to the French.

Chief Iroquet was there, and with him was Étienne Brulé, none the worse for his winter in the wilderness and the poor fare of savage life. The lad was dressed in the rude toggery of the Indians, and so bronzed by the sun and wind that Champlain scarcely knew him. But he was in high spirits, and told the captain that he had been treated with every kindness by his Indian friends, and that, besides mastering their language, he had learned a great many things about their country and its resources.

But the lad had very little of importance to tell Champlain about the great water beyond the country of the Hurons, and there is no certain proof that he had gone far enough westward to see it with his own eyes. He had come down the Ottawa with Iroquet's band of Algonquins and two hundred Hurons; and in his canoe he had shot boldly down the great rapids,—the first white person to perform that perilous feat.

"Four hundred other Hurons were intending to come," he said, "but they heard that the Frenchmen were bringing a war party of Iroquois to destroy them, and were afraid to leave their homes."

Among those who had dared to come were two chiefs, one of them a brother of Savignon, the young hostage that had been given to Champlain. Savignon was delighted to see them. He told his brother that the white men had given him plenty of food and had been



"Champlain scarcely knew him"

very good to him; yet he would rather dwell with his kin and endure their hard fare and share their privations than be the French captain himself. And so another exchange was made, and the two youths returned, each to his own people, — the one happy and contented, the other restless and determined to escape again to the wilderness as soon as an opportunity offered.

VI. PLACE ROYALE

On the following day the traffic in furs and trinkets began. The French traders were insolent and overbearing, and the Indians soon became alarmed. Rumors spread among them that it was the intention of the traders to fall upon them suddenly and kill them with their dread-

ful arquebuses. Their fears increased until, in the end, they put their canoes upon their shoulders and by a devious pathway carried them back to the smooth waters of Lake St. Louis above the rapids. The ill-behaved traders, having already secured furs enough to load their boats,



"Dexterous canoemen carried them down"

cared little whether they went or stayed ; but Champlain was unwilling to have his dusky allies leave him in this manner, for he counted largely on their future friendship. Taking young Brulé with him, therefore, he followed the fleeing Hurons and overtook them, just as they were entering the Lake of Two Mountains at the mouth of the Ottawa.

"Oh, great white chief !" they said, "we trust in you, we love you. Come to our country ; buy our furs ; live

with us, and be our brother. But, we pray you, keep this crowd of ruffians away from us."

It was useless to try to persuade them to return; but they promised that in the following spring they would come again, bringing such furs as they could collect. Champlain, therefore, distributed presents among them and bade them good-bye.

"My young men," said one of the chiefs, "will take you down to the island much quicker than you can walk."

The captain and young Brulé entered a canoe that was in waiting, and with a swiftness that was truly alarming, dexterous canoemen carried them down the long succession of falls now known as the Lachine Rapids.

Champlain remained on the island only a few days longer. He chose a site for a trading house and fort, and his men cleared off the trees and stones and began to build a wall of masonry along the river front.

Place Royale was the name which the captain chose for his fort. It was on the spot where, long afterward, stood the Hospital of the Gray Nuns. But, before the small fragment of wall was completed, orders were given that the work should cease, and the plan was abandoned. Champlain summoned his men on board the ship; the vessel was loosed from her moorings, and, with the boats of the fur traders trailing in her wake, sailed slowly back to Quebec. The Island of Montreal was again left to its solitude, and the gateway to the Northwest remained for a little while longer the extreme limit of exploration.

AN IMAGINARY DISCOVERER

I. AMBITIOUS DREAMS

AMONG the traders who came up the river with Champlain, there was one young man who did not return to Quebec. His name was Nicholas Vignau, and he was known among his friends as an indolent fellow whose

1611

word was not always to be depended upon. He was of a roving nature, and, having already spent a winter or two in the fort at Quebec, he had become acquainted with some of the Indians and had learned their language quite well. From a band of Algonquins who lived in the Ottawa country he had, no doubt, heard some vague hints of the great water that was said to lie in the distant West.

Had any of them seen this great water?



No; but they had heard of it from their friends and neighbors, the Hurons, whose homes were near its shore.

Nicholas, although not brave, was ambitious. He thought what a glorious thing it would be to push on ahead of Champlain and be the first white man to behold that mysterious and long-sought sea. What if it should indeed be the South Sea, with China, and India, and the golden East lying on its farther shore? He felt himself already a second Balboa, surveying the vast sea from the mountain tops, and taking possession of new worlds in the name of his king.

He said nothing about the matter to his companions; but from Champlain he quietly obtained leave to spend the winter among the Indians so as to become better acquainted with their language and customs. And, indeed, in doing this, he was only following the wishes of his captain, who thought that, by sending some of his young men among the Indians, he would the sooner acquire a complete knowledge of the country. At the great meeting on the Island of Montreal he took pains to make friends with certain Ottawa chiefs whose homes were somewhere near the source of the river that bears their name. The red men were pleased with his manners, and thought that he was very wise. Would he not go home with them, and live with them, that they might learn some of the wonderful things that he knew?

This was just the invitation that he wanted, and he was not slow in accepting it. And so, when the Algonquin Ottawas embarked in their canoes for their toilsome homeward voyage, young Vignau went with them.

II. THE TALK OF PARIS

For several months nothing was heard of the adventurous young man; but, early the next summer, just as a ship was leaving for France, he suddenly appeared at ¹⁶¹² Quebec. He had come down the St. Lawrence in a canoe, arriving barely in time to take passage for home. To his friends at the fort, who were anxious to know where he had been, he gave no information, preferring to tell his adventures to other listeners. Indeed, when he arrived the ship was already loosed from her moorings; and by the time he had clambered upon deck she was well out in the stream.

When Vignau reached Paris he had a wonderful tale to unfold. He said that with his Indian friends he had ascended the Ottawa River for some distance; he had then arrived at a great lake bordered on every side by trackless forests; in a birch canoe he had paddled across this lake and had come to its chief outlet, a river, smooth-flowing and deep yet much larger than the Ottawa or the St. Lawrence; he had followed this river northward and found that it flowed into a vast sea which could be none other than the Pacific Ocean. He had stood on the shore of that sea, which could be reached in seventeen days, by canoe, from Mont Royal. He had tasted of its waters and found them salt.

To this plain narrative Vignau added many tales of hairbreadth escapes and of wonderful feats of daring. The telling of them made him for the time the most admired hero in France. His dreams of glory seemed

to have come true. He was petted and flattered and dined and caressed until he hardly knew whether he was still Nicholas Vignau or some one else.

It so happened that, at this very time, Champlain was also in Paris trying again to interest the nobles of France



“He had a wonderful tale to unfold”

in his project of building up an empire in the valley of the St. Lawrence. Nothing could have helped his cause more than the wonderful tales of Nicholas Vignau. Men who had hitherto refused to listen to any of his plans now urged him, for the glory of France and their own profit, to accept their aid and push forward his explorations with all possible dispatch. Here, surely, was at last the long-sought northern passage. Champlain himself was filled with new hope, and he could scarcely wait for the sailing of the ship that was to carry him back to New France.

III. THE ASCENT OF THE OTTAWA

Late in the month of May the tireless captain was again at the Island of Montreal, where the lower channel of the Ottawa unites with the St. Lawrence.

1613

With him, besides his Indian guides, were five Frenchmen, one of whom was Nicholas Vignau. The young man had been persuaded, much against his will, to return to America and pilot Champlain's party to the scene of his late adventures, the great lake, and the salt sea beyond. Strange to say, he did not seem anxious to go forward, but was low-spirited and morose, sighing for sunny France and the gay streets of Paris. But Champlain, with his accustomed energy, was eager to push on without delay. The little party embarked in two small Indian canoes and paddled boldly up the Ottawa.

It was a hard voyage in the face of many difficulties. Now the canoemen propelled their light vessels through smooth, lake-like expanses dotted with numerous green islets; now they urged their way against swift currents where all their strength could scarcely prevent the frail craft from being dashed in pieces upon the rocks; and now, encountering steeper rapids, that were wholly impassable, they were obliged to carry their canoes on their shoulders up long and difficult slopes, to launch them again on the smoother water above. On both sides of the river was the unending forest, so thick with underwoods that beyond a few paces nothing could be seen.

At night they slept by a camp fire on the river bank, one of their number keeping watch. Owls hooted in the

branches above them, strange noises issued from the thickets, the screams of wild cats and the howls of wolves were heard in the depths of the forest. At daybreak all were astir, and, having caught some fish, they broiled them on the coals and made a royal breakfast. Then they embarked again, and, battling as before with the strong current, they made their slow way from point to point and from rapid to rapid, each stroke of their paddles carrying them a little farther into the unknown wilderness.

Thus, day after day, they toiled onward. At length they reached that expansion of the river called Lake Coulonge, above which lies the large island of the Allumettes. Here and beyond was the home of the Algonquins—the tribe which in time gave its name to the entire race of which it was only a single, small division. Known first to the French as the Nation of the Isle, this tribe is called in history the Ottawas.

Soon the voyagers came in sight of some rude clearings in the woods. The underbrush had been cut away, the smaller trees had been felled, and the larger trunks had been scorched by fire. Among the charred stumps and decaying logs were patches of cultivated ground where young corn was growing and pumpkin vines were beginning to trail over the blackened earth. In a grove close by were the huts of the Indian farmers—rude structures of poles covered with pieces of bark and the boughs of trees.

Some naked children playing in the fields were the first to see the two canoes coming up the stream. In great alarm they ran to their mothers, and soon the entire little settlement was aroused. The men, making signs of friend-

ship, and covering their mouths with their hands in token of astonishment, hurried out to meet the strangers. The old chief, with the peace pipe in his hands, stood at the water's brink and welcomed his visitors while he quieted the fears of his little flock.

"These men," he said, "must have come to us on the clouds; for how else could they have found us here in the thick woods?"

He begged the strangers to stay with him a few days; and, when they would not, he gave them a great dinner of broiled fish and sent some of his young men to guide them to the larger settlements of the tribe.

Deep hidden in the woods, at some distance from the river, stood the home of Tessouat, a chief of the Ottawas. Here were his clearings and his cornfields and the huts of his people. Here, shut in by dense underwoods and taller growths of oak and elm and pine, the old chief lived in a world that was all his own. But he was not wholly ignorant of the greater world outside. Three times he had floated his canoe down the river, carrying skins and furs to barter with the white men; and three times he had returned to his wives and people, bearing in his hands the profits of his trading, precious hatchets and knives and beautiful bits of colored glass. In the solitude of his forest home his delight was to tell strange stories of what he had seen, and especially of the big white-winged canoes that came floating like giant waterfowls up the broad St. Lawrence. Great was his surprise one morning when he saw Champlain and three other white men approaching his clearing by way of the wood path from the river.

"Am I really awake?" he cried, rubbing his eyes. "Do I see the great white chief, or am I only dreaming? Yes, truly, here is our young friend Nicholas, also! He comes again to be the guest of his redskinned brother."

Then he hurried forward to salute the Frenchmen and welcome them to his home. He bade his wives sweep his best cabin and make it ready for the guests; he ordered a solemn feast, or *tabagie*, to be prepared on the morrow; and he sent swift runners to the neighboring clearings to invite his brother chiefs to come and help show honor to the strangers. The women and children, and such of the young men as were at home, came to look at them, and stood in awed groups about the cabins, wondering what would happen next. "Our friend Nicholas has come again," they whispered. But the young Frenchman seemed not to relish their greetings.

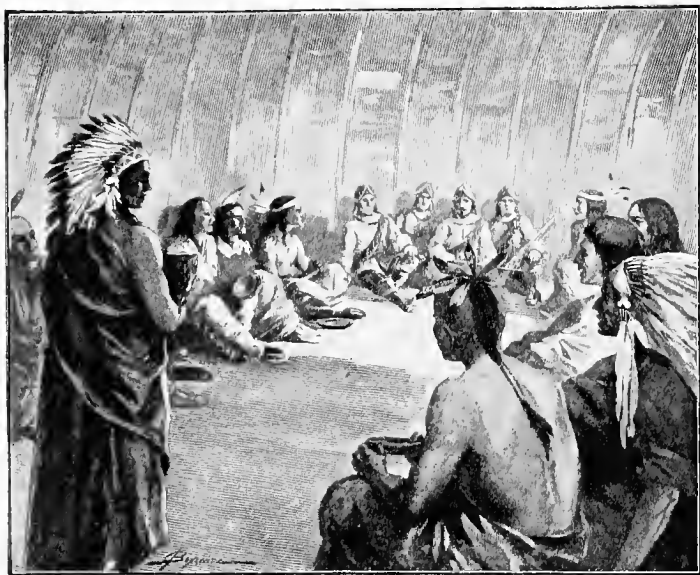
V. THE TABAGIE AT CHIEF TESSOUAT'S

The next day the *tabagie* was held. On the floor in Tessouat's best cabin, skins were spread for Champlain and his men to sit upon. Then the guests came, one by one, through the low door, each carrying his own wooden platter. "Welcome, white men!" was their brief salute. They sat down on the bare ground; and Tessouat, walking between the rows of squatting chiefs, dealt out to each his due portion, first of boiled hominy and fish, afterwards of broiled meats.

Of the latter the Frenchmen tasted warily, for whether the flesh was that of dogs, or of wild animals, or of human

beings, they did not know. But the Indians ate greedily, and soon everything was devoured. Then the women brought in fire to light the pipes; the cabin door was closed; and for many minutes the chiefs sat in silent thought, smoking very busily, but saying not a word.

At last, when the pipes were emptied and the room was



"The next day the tabagie was held"

dark with smoke, Champlain broke the silence. He made a little speech in which he told the Indians that he loved them more than he could tell, and that he had traveled unknown miles for no other reason than to see them. He said that he was so charmed with their country that he would like to pass through the whole length of it, even to

their northern neighbors, the Nipissings, and to the mighty water which was said to lie beyond. Would they not kindly lend him four good canoes and let some of their young men go with him as guides?

For a time the chiefs made no reply; but they relighted their pipes and smoked very hard, while they spoke in low tones to one another.

"Who has told him about the Nipissings and the great water?" some asked.

"The Nipissings are no friends of ours," murmured others.

At last Tessouat stood up and spoke. He told Champlain that they all loved him, and for that reason they were unwilling for him to go among the Nipissings. "They are a cowardly people," he said; "but they are very dangerous, because they deal in poisons and charms and witchcraft."

Champlain answered that he was not afraid, and that his mind was made up to visit the great water which he knew lay beyond the country of the Nipissings.

"But the river above us is full of waterfalls and rapids," said Tessouat, "and the place that you name is far distant. If you escape the whirlpools and the rocks, how can you carry your canoes for miles through the forest? I tell you that no one, save the Hurons who live on its shores, has ever been able to reach the great water."

Then Champlain took Nicholas Vignau by the hand and made him stand up before the council. "Here is a man," he said, "who has been through the country of the Nipissings, and he has sailed on the great water beyond it even to the western sea. He did not find the way so hard."

"What! what!" cried Tessouat. "Does Nicholas say that? Nicholas, do you say you have been there?"

Young Vignau glanced around him, and for some moments was dumb. Then he murmured, "Yes, I have been there."

At once a great outcry arose among the chiefs: "What does he say? What does he say?" And they looked as if they would tear him in pieces. But Tessouat made answer.

"Nicholas," he said, "why do you tell this lie? You know very well that you slept here in my cabin every night that you were among us, and that you were never nearer the Nipissings than you are now. It was in my canoe that you came up the Ottawa after the great meeting at the rapids; and it was in my canoe that you went back to the St. Lawrence in the spring. Tell us when and how you went to the country of the Nipissings."

Nicholas could not say a word. He could not look the old chief in the face. Champlain was greatly annoyed. He led the young man aside, and said: "Nicholas, tell me if you have been deceiving me. Your own actions speak against you. If you really went on to the great sea, speak up and tell the chiefs all about it."

"I will, I will!" cried Nicholas; and then he stood before the council and repeated the story he had told so often in Paris.

When he had finished, the Indians broke forth in a storm. "Who went with you?" they cried. "Which way did you go? You know that your story is false."

In the midst of the uproar, the young man stood trembling, unable to say a word. Champlain took hold of his arm. "Nicholas," he said, "you must explain all this. If

you have deceived me, say so, and I will forgive you. But if you say nothing, and I find your story to be false, I will have you hanged."

The poor fellow could hold out no longer; he fell upon his knees and confessed that he had never been nearer the great water than at that moment, and that all his wonderful tales were untrue. Champlain was so angry that he ordered the culprit from his sight, and forbade him ever to come into his presence again.

"Why did you believe this worthless fellow?" cried the Indians. "Why did you not listen to chiefs and warriors?" And then the solemn council broke up.

Champlain scarcely knew what step to take next. He was now at the farthest western point that any white person except the boy Brulé had ever reached in that part of the continent. Of the existence of a vast sea somewhere beyond the great forest, there could be no doubt. But how far was it to its shores? Chief Tessouat told him that he had not yet made half the journey. If this were true, his toil had scarcely begun, and without more men and canoes it would not be wise to venture into the unknown wilds before him.

And so the enterprise was given up. In a few days the Frenchmen and their guides bade good-bye to Tessouat's people and began their return voyage to the St. Lawrence. Forty Indian canoes went with them, loaded with furs to be bartered to the traders who were expected to meet them at the Island of Montreal. It was easier to float down the stream than to paddle against it; and so the journey was quickly and pleasantly performed.

THE FIRST OF THE GREAT LAKES

I. A BROTHER OF THE RÉCOLLETS

TWO years passed before Champlain made another effort to discover the secret of the wilderness. During a part of that time he was at Quebec, strengthening the little settlement he had planted there, doing
1615 what he could for the fur traders, who grew more numerous each succeeding summer, and making friends with the Indians west and north. But much of the time he spent in France, trying to persuade the king and his nobles of the importance of occupying the St. Lawrence Valley and of making further explorations into the unknown West. He still believed that the St. Lawrence was part of a great water way across the continent, and he was convinced that this water way, when once known to the world, would be the source of vast wealth to the country which controlled it.

In the spring of 1615 there came to Canada four brothers of the Récollet Order of Franciscan monks. They had been invited to this field by Champlain; for the heart of that brave man had been filled with pity for the wretched savages, "living," as he said, "like brute beasts without religion and without God," and he had resolved to do what he could to promote their conversion to the Christian faith. The four friars were full of zeal, and

ready to bear all hardships and brave all dangers, in order to carry the cross to the benighted heathen. They had scarcely set foot upon the soil of the New World when each started forth to his allotted field of labor.

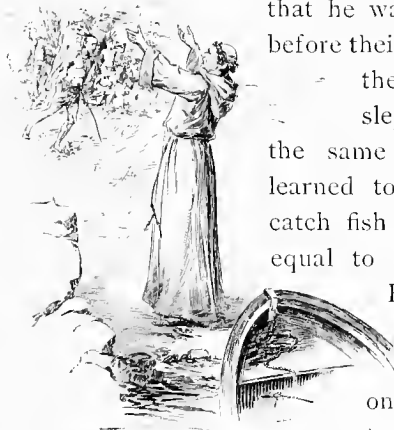
The vast region of the West had been assigned to Joseph le Caron, the youngest and most enthusiastic of the four. It was now the season when the Hurons and the Ottawas with their loads of furs were hastening down the river to meet the traders on their yearly visit to the Island of Montreal. The good brother was impatient to begin his work, and could scarcely wait for the slow-moving trading vessel to bear him to the place of meeting. At last, one morning in May, the shores of the island appeared on the right, and Le Caron saw the river before him alive with the fur-laden canoes of the savages. As the ship approached the landing place he beheld crowds of wild, ignorant, and naked men, moving among the trees, and his heart went out to them in love.

"These are the men to whom the rest of my life shall be given!" he cried; and he hastened to go ashore.

He was dressed in the long gray robe of his Order, girt round the waist by a knotted cord. The peaked hood that was sometimes drawn over his head had fallen back upon his shoulders, leaving his shaved crown bare. His feet were protected only by sandals strapped about his ankles. He carried no weapon, displayed no symbol of authority. His whole appearance was so different from that of other men that the Indians were filled with awe at sight of him. They wondered whether he was not some higher type of being hitherto unknown to them; and when they learned

that he had come, not to buy their furs, but to live with them and do them good, they were astonished beyond measure.

Le Caron began his work at once. He went about among the red men, and by word and action showed them that he was truly their friend. He sat before their camp fires, and smoked with them the pipe of peace. He slept in their wigwams. He ate the same simple food as they. He learned to paddle their canoes and to catch fish from the rapids with a skill equal to their own. When soon the Hurons had bartered away all their furs and were ready to return to their homes, one of their chiefs invited him to go with them.



"His heart went out to them "

"Gladly will I do so," he answered, "for I am your brother. I will spend the winter in your villages."

Champlain and the traders tried to dissuade him. They told him of the hardships that he must endure among the savages, of the extreme cold of the Canadian winter, of the wretched hovels, of the poor food, of the thousand perils he would have to face.

"Why need I fear such things?" he asked, "I who have given my life to poverty and whose chief thought is to serve God and do good to men."

And so when the Hurons began their homeward voyage

up the forest-bordered Ottawa, Le Caron obtained leave to go with them. By order of Champlain twelve soldiers accompanied him, not as a bodyguard, but to be in readiness for an important expedition soon to be undertaken from the Huron country. Only four or five of these soldiers knew how to handle firearms; but their valor in war was unquestioned. Not even the friar was to have a free passage, for every man was expected to wield a paddle and help with the canoes.

II. THE WILDERNESS WAY

It was midsummer, and Nature in the northern wilderness was at her best. In the woods, on both sides of the river, thousands of singing birds filled the air with melody; the open glades were bespangled with wild flowers; and over river and forest there was the calm beauty of perfect days. But the Indians cared little for these things. Very few of them had ears for melody, eyes for beauty, or hearts for the appreciation of Nature's bounties. The sights and sounds which gave the good friar unmeasured delight made no impression upon their savage minds.

A hundred times, where the water was shallow and swift, Le Caron and his companions were obliged to wade through the mud and over sharp stones, pushing their canoes before them. Often everything had to be carried around waterfalls or dangerous rapids, up steep ascents, and through pathless underwoods. Often at the close of the day there was nothing to eat save a little pounded corn mixed with water and warmed over the

coals of the camp fire. Every day there was weariness and hunger.

"It would be hard to tell you how tired I was," wrote the friar to a friend in France; and yet the thought of the



"Where the water was shallow and swift"

great work which he had undertaken made him happy and contented.

Day after day the toiling savages kept on their way. They paddled through the broad expanse of Lake Coulonge, and saw the lonely clearings of the Algonquins on its banks. They passed the island of the Allumettes, the home of Chief Tessouat, until now the farthest point in the wilderness which any white man had reached. They pushed steadily onward toward the sources of the Ottawa,

their passage growing more and more difficult with each day's advance.

At length, leaving the main stream, they entered the Mattawa, a small tributary which flows into the Ottawa from the west. From morning till night, and far into the next day, they paddled onward, the banks ever drawing closer together, the water ever growing shallower, until the canoes would float no farther. Then the Indians loaded everything upon their shoulders. Le Caron carried his own canoe; the soldiers bore their share of the burdens. Following a narrow path through thickets and over marshy places, they soon reached a placid lake with a bold, wooded shore, trending east and west.

III. THE MER DOUCE OF THE HURONS

They were now in the country of the Nipissings, the nation of reputed sorcerers and spellworkers; and here no pause was made, for, of all the Algonquin tribes, the Nipissings, though friendly, were least trusted. The Hurons launched their canoes upon the lake—to this day known by the name of the treacherous tribe—and followed its nearest shore to its outlet on the west. This outlet, known since that time as the French River, they entered without hesitation and, lest the Nipissings should cast a spell upon them, without looking back. Their course was now downstream, but the current was not swift, and the canoes moved slowly.

The Indians had eaten up all their pounded corn, and were obliged to stop often to search for food. Here and

there they found blueberries ripening on sunny hillsides. Now and then some skillful hunter with his bow and arrow contrived to bring down a small bird or chattering squirrel. With these and some succulent roots the party fought their hunger, Le Caron sharing and suffering with the rest.

And now the canoes glide for miles between picturesque shores with stretches of barren land on either side where only the hardiest shrubs find nourishment. The July sun pours its beams upon the head of the toilworn friar, and he falls back, overcome, into the arms of his companion. But suddenly he is aroused by cries from the other canoes. He raises his head and looks. They are approaching the great water. Before them the vast sea stretches away and away until it meets the blue sky in the far distance. To the right and the left its shores extend northwestward and southward farther than the eye can reach. Le Caron staggers to his feet. His joy makes him forget for the moment that he is only a poor friar whose sole ambition is to carry the knowledge of the cross into the wilderness. He can scarcely wait for his canoe to reach the mouth of the stream and shoot out into the rippling waters beyond. He dips his hand into the waves and raises it to his lips. The water is sweet to the taste ; there is not the slightest trace of the saltish bitterness that belongs to the ocean.

"It is the *Mer Douce!*" cries the friar. "It is the great Fresh-water Sea of which we have heard so much!" He lands at once, and, planting a cross in the sand, gives thanks that he has been brought safe to this remote spot in the heart of the wilderness.

But now he remembers himself and his mission, and the glory of his discovery is forgotten. He has come to the New World, not to explore new regions, but to save souls. To him the baptism of a single savage is of far greater importance than the discovery of many seas. Henceforward nothing shall for a moment cause his mind to waver from the great purpose to which he has dedicated his life.

It was thus that, in July, 1615, the humble Récollet brother, Joseph le Caron, discovered the first known of the five Great Lakes. By the French it was long known as the Mer Douce, or Fresh-water Sea, of the Hurons. Later it received the name of Lake Iroquois; but this designation soon gave place to its present title, Lake Huron, thus preserving the memory of the frowzy-haired savages whose homes were near its shores.

THE SECOND OF THE GREAT LAKES

I. THE TREATY WITH THE HURONS

THE discovery of Lake Ontario followed quickly upon that of Lake Huron, but it happened in a way that you would never have supposed. Looking at a map of



the lakes, you would say that its discovery was most likely made by ascending the St. Lawrence directly from the Island of Montreal. This certainly would seem the easiest and most natural way. But it must be remembered

that Champlain had no map, except a very imperfect one of his own making, and that, aside from the vague descriptions given him by the Indians, he was entirely ignorant of the course of the river. He had been told that it was obstructed by rapids and by waterfalls of immeasurable height. Moreover, the region through which it flowed was infested by the dreaded Iroquois, whose war parties patrolled the forests and were supposed to guard every pass. Plainly, therefore, the only safe route westward from the Island of Montreal was by way of the Ottawa River, through regions inhabited by Indians not unfriendly to the French.

Let us go back now to that time in May when the Indians and fur traders had their spring meeting in the shadow of Mont Royal, and when Father le Caron made his first acquaintance with savage life. Champlain was at that meeting, doing all that he could to promote friendship among the Indians, and to unite 1615 the tribes of the St. Lawrence in a league for self-defense and the advancement of French interests. The Hurons came to him with the old story of wrongs suffered from the Iroquois; and they begged that he would help them strike one more blow at their hated enemies. They would raise a great war party, they said; they would invade the country of the Iroquois, and destroy their villages and farms; they would drive them far back from the St. Lawrence—all this they would do, if only the white chief with a few of his warriors would go home with them and put himself at the head of their young braves and go on the warpath with them.

Champlain did not need much persuasion. He had already made the Iroquois his enemies. Knowing but little of their strength, he believed that it would be easier to crush them than by any means to win their friendship. By fighting them he would secure the allegiance and aid of all the tribes north of the St. Lawrence.

An agreement with the Huron chiefs was therefore soon made. Champlain was to hurry back to Quebec to make the needful preparations. The Hurons were to go directly home, call their warriors together, and await his coming. Then all were to join in a grand raid into the land of the Iroquois.

Within two weeks from the time that Father le Caron had started on his wearisome voyage up the Ottawa, Champlain had returned from Quebec and was following on his track. With him were ten Indians and two Frenchmen, one of whom was young Étienne Brulé, soon to become known as the bravest among the scouts of the wilderness. These, with the twelve soldiers who had gone on before, were to be the French contingent of the war.

The company embarked on the Ottawa in two canoes, and pushed forward with the hope of overtaking the Hurons and the missionary. They passed the place where now stands the capital city of Canada. They carried their canoes around the cataract of Chaudière, where the awed Indians paused to throw gifts of tobacco into the whirling stream to appease the manitou of the waters. They paddled through Lake Coulonge, already familiar to Champlain. They skirted the island home of Chief Tessouat, but did not tarry to renew old friendships. They toiled against the rapids in the upper course of the river, then turned into the Mattawa, and crossed the short portage to Lake Nipissing. Here they were entertained for two days by a friendly band of Nipissings, who welcomed the white men to their cabins and gave them a feast of fish and of choice game from the woods. Then they embarked again, and, floating down the French River, finally reached the Mer Douce, the great lake of the Hurons, only ten days after its discovery by Father le Caron.

What may have been the feelings of Champlain as he at last stood upon the shore of this "great water" it is impossible for us to know. True, it was not the western

ocean, the object of his desires, for the water here was fresh; but he had reasons to believe that that greater water was only a short distance farther west. He doubtless had dreams of the wonderful lands which he supposed to lie beyond the western horizon. There, he imagined, were China and India and the golden East; but his wildest fancy failed to picture the great hives of human industry, the wealth and power, which now exist in that then unknown region of the Old Northwest.

The home of Champlain's Huron allies was still far away, toward the southern point of that arm of Lake Huron which we call the Georgian Bay. The canoes were therefore soon launched on the great water, and the voyage was resumed. Day after day the adventurers held on their course, keeping the land close on their left. They skirted many a wooded island, and glided through many a rocky channel where the only sound to be heard was the lapping of the waves against the shore, or the screaming of some fishhawk circling in the clear air above them. Food became scarce, for the savages had eaten so heartily at the beginning of the expedition that the supply was exhausted. But some squashes and wild berries were found on the shore, and with these the voyagers were obliged to satisfy their hunger.

II. OTOÛACHA

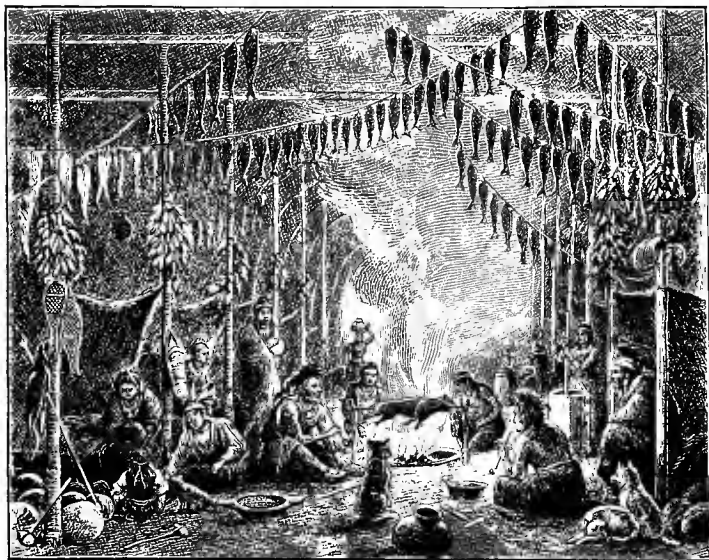
At length, early in the month of August, Champlain and his companions reached the end of their voyage — a voyage on rivers and lakes of nearly a thousand miles.

The canoes were hauled ashore and lifted upon the shoulders of the brawny Indians. Then the whole party struck inland. Following a narrow path through the tall grass of the meadows and among the thickets which
1615 skirted the great forest, they came in time to a large clearing upon the slope of a sunny hill. There, surrounded by fields of corn and patches of gay sunflowers, stood the village of Otoiüacha, one of the twenty or more settlements of the Hurons.

In the village were perhaps thirty houses, all built in the fashion peculiar to the Hurons and Iroquois. They were much like the buildings which Jacques Cartier had found at Hochelaga, eighty years before. Each house was thirty or thirty-five feet in width, while several were of great length, one of them measuring one hundred and eighty feet from end to end. The framework was of stout saplings bent over at the top, so as to form an arching roof, and the whole was covered with layers of bark. At the middle of the roof, extending the whole length of the house, there was an open space several inches wide which served at once for window and chimney. The fires were built on the ground directly under this opening, and each fire served for two families. Ranged along the two sides of the great room were scaffolds supported by poles and covered with bark and skins. In the summer time these were used as sleeping places; but in the winter the families slept on the ground, closely huddled together around the fire. Suspended from the arched roof were bunches of dried herbs, ears of unshelled corn, the skins of various animals, and numerous ornaments and articles of dress.

In a single house there were often as many as twenty families.

The people of Otoüacha received Champlain with many expressions of joy. A great feast was made in his honor, and vast quantities of pumpkins and corn and fish, with



Interior of a Huron house

roasted dog and other savory meats, were consumed. Runners were sent to the other villages, and warriors began to assemble, eager for the great raid into the land of the Iroquois.

On the next day, Champlain began a tour through the other settlements of the Hurons; and hearty was the welcome with which he was everywhere greeted. One of their

largest villages was Carhagouha, surrounded by high palisades — three rows of tree trunks — and guarded by dusky warriors. Here, whom should he meet but the humble friar, Joseph le Caron, who, with his twelve soldier companions, had arrived there several days before. "Good father," said Champlain, "the chase has been a long one, but I have overtaken you at last."



"The strong men knelt in adoration"

The Hurons, who had been strangely won by the gentleness and unselfishness of the friar, had built for him a little chapel of bark in the edge of the woods. And there, on the twelfth of August, clad in priestly robes, he stood before a rude altar which he had made with his own hands and performed the ceremony of holy mass. Champlain and Étienne Brulé and the other

Frenchmen who had ventured into that wilderness land were ranged behind him. The priest raised aloft the emblems of the Catholic faith; the strong men knelt in reverent adoration; and then the voices of all joined in singing a hymn of praise to God. Thus, in the quiet of the ancient forest, just outside of the chief village of the Hurons, was performed the first public religious service in the country of the Great Lakes.

III. THE DISCOVERY OF LAKE ONTARIO

Meanwhile, the Huron warriors were getting ready for the warpath, and there was much feasting and rejoicing because of the victories that were hoped for, although they had yet to be won. From Carhagouha, Champlain and his men journeyed southward, where were several villages close together, and where the beauty and richness of the country were unexcelled. The Frenchmen were impatient to advance, but the Indians had so forgotten themselves in their various festivities that they were no longer anxious to go upon the warpath. It was pleasanter to feast and dream of conquest than to endure the hardships and dangers of a real campaign. After many delays, however, everything was finally ready, and the horde of dusky warriors, twenty-five hundred strong, set their faces toward the enemy's country, their hearts full of savage courage and hope.

Far to the south, three days' journey beyond the country of the Iroquois, there lived a nation that had always been friendly to the Hurons. The people of this nation were

called Andastes. They dwelt in three villages near the headwaters of a great river and could muster fully a thousand warriors. They had more than once, in former days, aided the Hurons in warfare against their common foes, and they had promised to aid them again. If only they could be told about the great war party that was now on its way, they would no doubt send their young men at once to attack the Iroquois from the south and thus make the defeat doubly sure.

And so a council was held, and twelve warriors were chosen to go with all haste, by the safest and most secret route, to the country of the Andastes and secure their aid. Champlain thought that for several reasons it would be wise to send one of his white men with this embassy. He had no trouble in making a choice; for who was so well fitted for this dangerous service as young Étienne Brulé?

Look now at the map, and trace the course of the great war party of Hurons. On Lake Simcoe, which bounded their country on the south, a fleet of canoes awaited them. Embarking in these, they paddled eastward along its northern shore for twenty miles or more. Then after carrying their canoes through the woods for a long distance, they reached the chain of smaller lakes and streams that form the headwaters of the river Trent. They made many stops on the way, now feasting in some friendly

1615 village, now fishing in the clear, cold streams, now
 hunting deer and small game in the dense woods.

At length, late in September, the canoes glided suddenly out from the mouth of the Trent, and the eyes of Champlain were gladdened by the sight of the watery ex-

panse of which he had already heard much from his Indian friends — Lake Ontario, the second of the Great Lakes to be beheld by white men. But Étienne Brulé, hastening by the nearest route to the country of the Andastes, had doubtless seen this lake and paddled his canoe upon it several days before; and it is to him rather than to Champlain that the honor of its discovery belongs.

IV. THE RAID UPON THE IROQUOIS

The course of the invading warriors was now across the narrow northeastern portion of the lake, where many small islands lay in their way, making their passage easier and safer. In a short time they landed on the opposite side, in what is now the state of New York. They hid their canoes in the thickets by the shore, and then, like the skulking mob of marauders which they were, they stole cautiously through the woods southward into the heart of the Iroquois country.

We need not follow them. It is enough to know that their invasion did not end in success. Without waiting for the expected aid from the friendly Andastes, Hurons and Frenchmen made a hasty attack upon a well-fenced town of the Onondagas. But they met with such sturdy resistance that they were glad to withdraw. The Iroquois were better fighters than they, and were not to be thrown into a panic by the firing of a few arquebuses. Champlain himself was wounded, and was carried away in a basket. The great war party was broken up into small bands, and each band made its way back, as best it

could, to the homes of the nation by the shore of the Mer Douce.

Champlain, after many thrilling adventures, succeeded in recrossing Lake Ontario, and soon after the beginning of winter was safely housed in one of the villages of the Hurons. And there, suffering from his wounds and con-

finied by the storms of a most rigorous season, he was obliged to remain until the following spring.

In the meanwhile, Father le Caron had found plenty to do in the village of Carha-gouha. He made himself at home with the poor people there, and interested himself in their welfare. He sat in their councils, and



“‘What good news have you now?’”

smoked with the old men who were too feeble to follow the warpath. He was always ready to offer a helping hand to those who were in need, and to give a word of kindly sympathy to those who were in distress. The children loved him, and the whole village held him in respect. But, while they regarded his religion as something to be thought of with awe and a species of reverence, they could not understand it, and not one convert did the good friar make.

In the spring, for some reason that has not been explained, he decided to return to Quebec. He did not know that Champlain had spent the winter in another village not forty miles away; for deep drifts of snow lay between Carhagouha and the rest of the world, and for months no news was brought in from the other settlements. With the first breaking up of the ice the friar was ready to start on the long voyage, by way of Lake Nipissing and the Ottawa, back to the settlement on the St. Lawrence. Had he waited ten days longer he might have had the company of Champlain. It so happened, however, that the two men did not see each other again until they met a month later at the little fort of Quebec. We can imagine that meeting and the heartiness with which the sturdy captain greeted the meek and devoted friar.

“What good news have you now, Father le Caron?”

“Good news? Why, the same story of hardships and discouragements in a good cause. But shall we not persevere?”

“Indeed we shall, and we shall succeed, too.”

But henceforth Le Caron's work was to be in other fields, and we shall hear of him no more.

THE THIRD OF THE GREAT LAKES

I. THE YOUNG MAN FROM NORMANDY

AT about the time that the Récollet friar, Joseph le Caron, was returning from his winter's sojourn among the Hurons, there came to Canada a young man from Normandy whose name was Jean Nicolet. From 1616 boyhood he had been a restless fellow, fond of adventure, and eager for new and dangerous enterprises. His father had wished him to become a priest, and his mother had taken pains to have him instructed in all the common observances of religion. But he could not endure restraint, and the free life of the woods with all its perils seemed to him much pleasanter than the quiet humdrum of a village or the noisy bustle of a city.

He had heard much about the vast new country of Canada, about its trackless forests and its rivers whose sources no man had yet discovered. He had listened to strange tales about the savage men and the wild beasts which lived and roamed in that unexplored region; and vague stories had come to his ears of mighty seas hidden in the wilderness, and of a direct passage through them to the golden shores of China. A mind like his was easily stirred by reports of this kind; and, before the beard had begun to grow on his chin, he had left his humble home and

embarked on a ship that was setting sail for this fairyland of adventure.

When he arrived at the little station of Quebec he was without money and without friends. But of what use was money in the wild woods where there was nothing to buy? And as for friends, would not his quick wit and his kind heart win for him as many as he needed? Champlain, who could read a man's character well, saw that Nicolet was brave and shrewd, and that he was well suited for the daring work of a scout and trader among the Indians. He therefore advised him to go and live among the Algonquins on the Ottawa, to learn their language and manners, and to inure himself to all the hardships of life in the wilderness.

A trading vessel was about to sail for the Island of Montreal, and Jean Nicolet embarked as a passenger. There were other adventurers on board, for it was at the time of the spring meeting of traders and Indians at the mouth of the Ottawa. The "beaver fair," as it came to be called, was then rather a new thing; for the Indians had only recently learned to carry their furs there to be bartered to the French traders. It was soon to become the great event of the year and the chief market for furs in Canada.

There were some Ottawa Indians on the vessel—going home after a visit to the great white chief; and with these Jean Nicolet hastened to become acquainted. He took careful notice of everything that was said, and soon learned many of their words and was able to talk with them. They were much pleased with all this; and

when he told them that he was going to live like them in the wild woods, they said that he was very brave and would be a great man.

When the ship arrived off the Island of Montreal, the traders showed young Nicolet the place which Champlain had chosen for a fort. "If a strong blockhouse were



"On the lookout for bargains"

built here," they said, "it would guard the only gateway to the west, and make this point the chief center of the fur trade and the most important place in Canada."

At this very place, lining the shore of the island, there are now long lines of wharves and storehouses, and narrow streets where the hum of traffic is daily heard. But when Jean Nicolet landed there he saw only some

smouldering fires on the bank and a few straggling Indian huts among the trees. A little farther on, there was a much busier scene. The river seemed alive with Indian canoes and the boats of the traders. On the shore were tents and booths and blazing camp fires; and among these moved Frenchmen, armed and gayly uniformed, and tall, lithe savages in the scanty garb of the woods.

Both red men and white were on the lookout for bargains. The former were neither so wise nor so wary as they afterward became, and were willing to barter the finest of their furs for a long knife, a sharp-edged hatchet, or an iron kettle. The latter, knowing the value of each class of goods, were intent upon getting as much as possible for as little as possible, and in this they succeeded well.

Jean Nicolet's first care was to become acquainted with the Indians. He was impatient to leave all signs of civilized life behind him, to plunge into the depths of the forest, to spend his days in hunting and trapping and wild adventure. He mingled with the red men and studied their manners; he threw aside his French clothing and dressed himself in skins and the toggerly of a savage; and before many days had passed he had gained the admiration and confidence of more than one Algonquin brave. At last, when all the furs had been bartered away and the traders were getting ready to return to Quebec, Nicolet had disappeared. He had joined himself to a party of Indian hunters, and was pushing his way through brakes and swamps and wild woods toward the headwaters of the Ottawa.

When next we hear of him he is with Chief Tessouat's people on the island of the Allumettes. Then he is with the Nipissings, then with the Hurons, and then again with the Ottawas. The free life of the forest was exactly suited to his restless nature, and he endured its hardships without any thought of complaint. Wandering freely wherever his fancy led him, he explored all that region which lies between the sources of the Ottawa and the great lake of the Hurons. He learned all the woodcraft of the Indians, and he knew their languages as well as his mother tongue. Living this wild life for years, his thoughts and habits became more and more like the thoughts and habits of his dusky friends. But the lessons of religion which his mother had taught him in his childhood remained deeply implanted in his heart, and these served constantly to remind him of home and civilization.

II. THE SCOUTS OF THE WILDERNESS

There is no doubt that Jean Nicolet, when visiting the Huron settlements, often met Étienne Brulé, whose life had been even fuller of wild adventure than his own. Brulé, as we have already learned, had been with Champlain in the last disastrous raid of the Hurons into the land of the Iroquois. He had been sent on a mission to the Andastes Indians, enemies of the Iroquois, who lived at some distance farther south. He had wintered with these savages, and in the spring had floated down the Susquehanna River to its mouth—being the first white man to set foot in what is now Pennsylvania. Returning

northward, he had been captured by a band of Iroquois, who had burned his face with firebrands and tortured him in the most dreadful manner; but his fearlessness and contempt of pain had won the admiration of his captors; a sudden thunderstorm so filled them with superstitious terror that they set him free and helped him on his way to the Huron country. Since then Brulé had lived much of the time among the tribes by the shores of the Mer Douce; he had made long voyages in his canoe, and had explored the lake country far to the west; and he had become so inured to savage life that he had no wish to return to civilization.

It is interesting to imagine Brulé and Nicolet spending many days together, each telling the other of the strange things he had seen, of his exploits in hunting and in war, and of his marvelous escapes from flood and fire and wild beasts and savage men. It is more than likely that Brulé then described a long canoe voyage which we know he had recently made toward the remote West. It was Champlain who had urged him to make this voyage.



"Each telling the other of the things
he had seen"

With another white man, named Grenolle, and several Hurons, he had paddled nine days along the great north shore, coming at last to the mouth of a broad river which enters the Mer Douce from the northwest. He had ascended that river for three days, until he arrived at the foot of some long and dangerous rapids, which prevented his farther progress. He found there some fishing Indians who called themselves Otchipwes (Chippewas), and who spoke the Algonquin language. These savages had told him that only a short distance above the rapids one would come to the shore of a vast sea, the end of which no man had ever yet beheld. And they gave him a large lump of copper which had been found on the shore of that mysterious water.

“And did you go onward and see with your own eyes the wonderful things which these Indians told you about?”

“If I had done so, would I not now be in Quebec telling Champlain of my discoveries? I need not explain why I did not go; but at some time I hope to pilot our captain to the shores of the western ocean and point out to him the long-sought route to China.”

“Do you really think that the great sea which the Otchipwes told you about is a part of that ocean?”

“There is no doubt about it. By that vast water lies the way to the South Sea which the Spaniards discovered more than a hundred years ago. Heretofore only one gateway to that ocean has been known to the world, and that lies at the southern end of the continent and is controlled by Spain. Soon this other and shorter route will be opened, and it shall belong to France.”

We can imagine Nicolet listening with the greatest attention. His knowledge of geography was very limited, but he had often heard of China and India, and he knew that for many years French and English navigators had been seeking in vain for a new route to the western ocean. He supposed that if that ocean could once be reached, it would be an easy matter to cross over into the strange lands on the other side.

"Did the Indians tell you anything about the people who live beyond the western sea?" Such is another question which he would probably ask Brulé.

"Nothing definite. But they said they had heard of men who looked a little like Frenchmen, but were of a darker color and had neither beard nor hair. These men, they said, dressed in a strange fashion, smoked long-stemmed pipes, and were armed with stone hatchets."

"The Nipissings, among whom I lived eight summers, told me the same story."

What could better satisfy the restless nature of these two rovers than to go in quest of the mysterious regions in the distant West? They cared nothing for the glory of discovery; but the mere love of adventure was always tempting them into new fields of danger. Yet we are not told, nor is it likely, that they agreed upon any plan of action. When they parted, each went his own way.

Soon after this, a dreadful fate overtook Étienne Brulé. In some way, we are not told how, he gained the ill will of certain young Hurons, and was treacherously beaten to death in one of their villages.

Not satisfied with killing their former friend, the wretched savages made a feast and ate his body.



“A dreadful fate”

Brulé's death was long remembered and lamented among the Indians; and, as they believed, it was strangely avenged. Alarmed at the cruel deed which had been done among them, the people of the village had deserted their homes and built a new town several miles away. But this did not free them from a feeling of guilt; for when, soon afterward, a strange sickness came upon them and destroyed nearly half

of the Huron nation, they declared that this affliction had come upon them as a punishment for their crime.

III. THE GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION

In the following year a great beaver market was held at the new trading post of Three Rivers, midway between

1633 Quebec and the Island of Montreal, and Jean Nicolet was there as interpreter for the Indian tribes. To Champlain, who was now the governor of New France, he no doubt related all that he had heard

about the far distant West. Not only did he narrate the story of Brulé's adventurous voyage and tell of the lump of copper brought from the shore of the unknown sea, but he repeated many vague tales which he had gathered among the Nipissings and the Hurons. He spoke especially of the wonderful people who were said to be "like Frenchmen, but had neither hair nor beards." These people he believed to be the same as those whom the Nipissings called "Ouinnepegs," which in the Algonquin language meant "men of the fetid water." Was it not possible that they and the people known to Europeans as Chinese were the same?

Champlain was deeply interested in these stories, and he determined to send some one to explore the water ways of the distant West, to discover if possible the best route to the South Sea, and to visit the country of the half-mythical Ouinnepegs.

Who was better fitted for this mission than Jean Nicolet? For a long time the heart of this brave woods ranger had been set upon learning more about the unknown regions toward the setting sun. Champlain saw in him one who, by nature and by experience, was peculiarly qualified for such an enterprise. It was easy to persuade him to go.

IV. THE DISCOVERY OF LAKE MICHIGAN

In the following summer, therefore, Nicolet started from Three Rivers on his long and dangerous voyage. With him were two Jesuit priests, Brébeuf and Daniel, bound for the Huron country, where the former

around the great sault, or rapids, and launching them above, he would soon reach a boundless sea, but a sea of fresh water, and, therefore, certainly not the salt ocean which he had hoped to discover. Did the Ouinnepegs, the "men of the fetid sea," live that way? Was there anywhere on the shores of that water a people who had neither hair nor beard, and who smoked long pipes and looked a little like Frenchmen?

The Chippewas were acquainted with a tribe called Ouinnepegs, or Winnebagoes, living on another lake some distance southward. But whether these were the men whom Nicolet sought, they could not say. He

asked them to give him guides; and, without taking the trouble to visit the mighty lake which was almost in sight, he ordered the canoes to be turned about, and forthwith retraced his way down the broad river.

When they again reached the lake of the Hurons, the explorers turned to the right, and, following the wooded shore, soon arrived in sight of the bold cliffs of the Island of Mackinac. And now Nicolet could see the shore of the mainland on either side, and was told that here was the passageway between the Mer Douce and another large body of water on the west. Continuing



Chippewas fishing

his course, it was not long until he entered that unknown sea, and, first of white men, beheld the vast expanse of waters since known as Lake Michigan.

Thus, ninety-nine years after Jacques Cartier stood on Mont Royal and gazed with eager eyes toward the northwestern wilderness, the third of the Great Lakes was discovered.

V. THE MEN OF THE FETID SEA

Still keeping close to the right-hand shore, Nicolet and his company paddled onward toward the west. They stopped for a day with some Algonquin Indians on the shore of the Bay de Noquet, and learned from them that the people called Ouinnepegs (Winnebagoes) or Men of the Fetid Water, lived south of them at a distance of two days' journey.

And did these people really dwell on the shores of a salt sea or fetid lake? No one knew of such a sea. Then, why had they been given the name of Ouinnepegs? In former times they may have lived by some such water, but the oldest man among them did not remember it.

Nicolet still had the thought of the western ocean in his mind, and he did not give up the idea that the Ouinnepegs had come from the neighborhood of its shores. He smoked the pipe of peace with the friendly Algonquins, and then started again on his voyage. His course was along the western shore of that arm of the lake which we call Green Bay, but which the French

afterward named Baie des Puans (Bay of the Fetids), because "the men of the fetid water" lived near it.

On the following day Nicolet landed again and was kindly received by some Indians of the tribe of Menominees—eaters of wild rice, whose home was on the river still known by their name. To these Nicolet made signs of friendship; and when they learned whither he was bound, they kindly offered to guide him to the chief town of the Ouinnepegs, now not many leagues away.

At length the voyagers, approaching the head of the bay, beheld the blue smoke curling up from the village huts of the tribe they were seeking. They turned their canoes into a narrow inlet near the mouth of the Fox River, and leaped ashore on the spot where now stands the city of Green Bay.

It was thus, while yet nearly the whole of North America was an unknown land, that Wisconsin was first entered by a white man. At that time scarcely half a dozen settlements had been made in our entire country. Not quite fifteen years had passed since the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth. A few Dutch trading posts had been established on the Hudson. In Virginia, a feeble colony, founded twenty-seven years before, was struggling for existence. Nowhere on the American continent had an Englishman ventured a hundred miles from the Atlantic coast. Imagine, if you can, the wildness and the vastness and the mystery of the country which lay between Jean Nicolet and the nearest outpost of civilization.

The voyage across the lakes had been a long one,

and Nicolet believed that he must now be near the western boundary of the continent. If that were true, he thought that the shores of China could not be far away—for he had no knowledge of the width of the Pacific Ocean. Indeed, he reasoned that these “men of the fetid water” were probably related in some way to the



“He went forward with great pomp and dignity”

Chinese. He lingered by the shore while he sent one of his guides into the village to tell the Ouinnepegs (Winnebagoes) that he, an ambassador of the French nation, had arrived in their land and would at once pay them a visit. Then he dressed himself in a long robe of scarlet damask embroidered with birds and flowers, and went forward with great pomp and dignity toward

the little cluster of wigwams. In each hand he held a pistol, while behind him was carried the white banner of France.

All the people of the village had come out to meet him; and when he drew near them he flourished his arms in the air and shot off his pistols. Hearing the deafening noise and seeing clouds of smoke rolling over the white man's head, the Winnebagoes were terribly frightened. The women and children ran back to their wigwams, crying that it was a spirit armed with thunder and lightning who had come down from the skies to visit them. But the warriors, although trembling, stood their ground; and when Nicolet greeted them kindly in the name of the king of France, they laid aside their fears and welcomed him to their village and country. The chief led him to his own wigwam and gave orders that a grand feast should be made ready in honor of the strangers.

That same afternoon Nicolet sat down with the Winnebago braves to a dinner, the like of which even he had never tasted. A hundred and twenty beavers, roasted, boiled, broiled, and fricasseed — besides green corn and other delicacies — were devoured by the Winnebagoes and their visitors. The pipes were lighted, and for some time all sat in silence, sending whiff after whiff of fragrant smoke into the air, while they meditated upon the possible outcome of the business that was before them.

Then Nicolet arose in his gorgeous robes and made a speech. He spoke in the Huron tongue, and then in the Algonquin, and then in all the Indian dialects of which

he was master. But it was hard to make the Winnebagoes understand; for they were a branch of the great Dakota or Sioux nation, and in speech and manners were very unlike the Indians of the East. With the help of his Chippewa guides, however, Nicolet at last made his meaning clear. He explained the object of his visit; told the Winnebagoes about the great power and boundless possessions of the French king; and said that his master had sent him to make a treaty of peace with them, and to ask them to join him against the dreaded enemy of all good people, the pitiless Iroquois.

The chiefs and warriors listened and were pleased. They answered that they were very willing to make a treaty of peace with the French king, and to be friendly with all his friends. As for the Iroquois, they had never had dealings with them, but had heard of them as a bloodthirsty and cruel race. And they ended with many assurances of peace and good will.

VI. THE "FATHER OF WATERS"

The business of the council being thus quickly and pleasantly ended, the Winnebagoes would gladly have persuaded Nicolet to stay with them for several days; but the summer season was near its close, and Nicolet wished to make some further explorations before returning to Canada and reporting his discoveries to Champlain. He still believed that he was near the western border of the continent, and he asked his new friends about the great water that lies toward the setting sun.

They told him that there was indeed a "great water" not very far to the westward; and they gave him guides to show him the shortest way thither. Choosing the lightest canoes, they guided him up the Fox River, skirting the northwestern shore of Winnebago Lake, and then threading the crooked channel of the river in its upper course, until they reached the villages of a tribe of Indians speaking the Algonquin tongue. They were the Mascoutins, or Fire Nation, and their name had been heard even among the Hurons as that of a tribe whose courage was unexcelled. It was easy to talk with these remote kinsmen of the Ottawas, and so, dismissing his Winnebago guides, Nicolet determined to rest a few days in their wigwams.

He asked the Mascoutins about the great water he was seeking. They answered that it was toward the southwest and might be reached in three days. By ascending the Fox a few miles farther he would reach a short and easy portage over which the canoes could be carried to another and larger river. That river, since known as the Wisconsin, would carry him directly to the mighty "father of waters."

Nicolet did not clearly understand their meaning. He had cherished the idea that he was approaching the western ocean; and when the Indians spoke of the "father of waters" he did not suppose that they meant a mere river. He was satisfied that he was now within three days' journey of the Pacific, and that a safe and sure route thither had been pointed out to him. But for some unknown reason he decided not to go farther in that direction at present.

There is no evidence that he even attempted to cross the portage to the Wisconsin River. Pushing southward, over-land and on foot, he visited various tribes of Indians, and was the first of white men to set foot within the territory now comprising the state of Illinois. Two weeks later, however, he was again, in company with his Huron canoemen, skimming over the waters of Green Bay. This time he followed the eastern shore, and on the peninsula between the bay and Lake Michigan he met and made friends with a band of Pottawattomies. Then venturing again into the broader lake, the party returned without further incident to the more familiar waters of Georgian Bay, and thence to the villages of the Hurons.

Early the next spring Nicolet made his way back to the St. Lawrence by way of the now well-known Ottawa route. He had heard that Champlain was at Three Rivers, where he had but lately built a fort, and thither he went to give an account of his discoveries in the distant West. It would be interesting to know what Champlain thought of his story; but that great man was now so busily occupied in looking after other affairs in Canada, that he was unable to do more than listen and commend.

He appointed Nicolet to be commissary and interpreter for the new settlement at Three Rivers, and induced him to give up the wild life of the woods and settle down to the more quiet occupations of the frontier post. But Nicolet always looked back with pleasure and regret to the adventurous days which he had spent among the savages of the Ottawa; and in his latter days he was often heard to say that he would have lived and died as an

Indian had it not been that he could not bear to absent himself wholly from the sacraments of the church which his mother had taught him to revere.

Seven years after his return from the West he was accidentally drowned while on his way to a friendly tribe to plead for the life of a savage prisoner who had been condemned to torture. "He left us examples," wrote a Jesuit priest who knew him — "he left us examples which recall apostolic times and inspire the most pious of men with a desire to imitate him." Three of the five states of the Old Northwest — Michigan, Wisconsin, and Illinois — honor him as their discoverer.

As for the great Champlain, who had done more than any other man for the upbuilding of French interests in Canada, he did not live long enough to follow up the discoveries which Nicolet had made. On Christmas Day, in the same year that the intrepid adventurer returned from the West, he died, a disappointed and broken-hearted man.

THE JESUIT MISSIONARIES

I. THE RESIDENCE OF SAINTE MARIE

YOU will remember that when Jean Nicolet was setting out on his long voyage to the far West, he was accompanied as far as to the Huron country by two Jesuit



"The vanguard"

priests, Father Brébeuf and Father Daniel. These men were the vanguard of a company of zealous missionaries who, about this time, began their labors among the savages of Canada. At the command of their Order they had given up home, country, friends—all that makes life dear—to carry the knowledge of their religion to the benighted heathen. They went forth without any means of sustenance, trusting that Providence would each day supply all their necessities. Hunger, cold, abuse of every sort, they bore without com-

plaint. They braved every danger, they shrank from no duty, they endured all things. Their motto was, "To the greater glory of God." Some of the Indians received them kindly and were glad to learn about the white man's religion; but others treated them with disdain, preferring to live in ignorance and to retain "the low and filthy habits of savagery."

It was not until after they had patiently suffered many indignities that Brébeuf and Daniel were able to win even the slightest favor from the Hurons. At length, however, their courage, their gentleness, their kindness even to their enemies, began to have an effect upon the depraved hearts of these savages. The people of two of the villages joined together in building the missionaries a house. It was a house after the Huron fashion, framed of saplings and covered with sheets of bark. The priests divided it by partitions into three rooms, one being a storeroom, another the kitchen and bedroom, and the third the chapel. In the chapel they built an altar, over which they placed the images and pictures which they had brought from France; and here Brébeuf gathered such of the people as would listen to him, and taught them some of the simpler mysteries of the Catholic faith.

Soon other Jesuits came into the Huron country or were sent out among the neighboring tribes. The red men listened with some show of patience to all that the priests said to them, and some of them professed to believe. "Yes, it is all true," they would say; but when urged to adopt the Christian religion they would shake their heads and say, "It is very good for you Frenchmen,

but we are another people, and our ways are different from yours." And so, undismayed by sore privations and courageous in the face of repeated failures, the faithful Jesuit fathers worked on with untiring zeal, teaching by

word and example the nobility of the Christian life and faith.

To promote the work of the missionaries, and provide for their greater safety, the Jesuits finally established, in the forest near the south-eastern point of

1639

the Georgian Bay, a fortified post which they called



In the chapel

the Residence of Sainte Marie. Here, protected on two sides by walls of masonry, and on the other by a ditch and a wooden palisade, were the headquarters of the Order. It was a place to which the fathers might repair for shelter in times of danger, or for needed rest after seasons of labor and exposure. Within the inclosure were a church, a large kitchen and dining hall, and lodging rooms for sixty persons. Outside were a hospital and a long house for the accommodation of Indian visitors.

To this place came others besides the Jesuit fathers—a small company of soldiers to serve as guards, and a few zealous lay brothers who were willing to serve the missionaries in whatever way they could, without pay. Some of the latter spent their time in hunting and fishing; some

cleared the ground and cultivated corn and wheat and garden vegetables; some were engaged in the care of poultry, swine, and cattle; and some of greater ability were intrusted with the management of the household and the defense of the fortifications. It was a strange community that thus sprang up in the heart of the wilderness, and served for a time as the outpost of Christendom and the base of supplies for the Jesuit missions.

II. THE SAULT SAINTE MARIE

Seven years after Nicolet's voyage to the West, two of the fathers started from the Residence of Sainte Marie to carry the news of the Cross to the Indians on the upper lakes. One of these was Charles Raymbault, an enthusiast whose pious zeal was far superior to his bodily strength. The other was Isaac Jogues, a young man from Orléans, noted for his scholarship, his refined and gentle manners, and his devotion to the Church. Both these men had been for some time among the Hurons; but now, hearing of savages in more remote regions, they felt impelled to carry to them also the light of the faith and the knowledge of redemption.

It is not unlikely that the story of Jean Nicolet's discoveries was well known to Raymbault and Jogues. For, upon leaving the Residence, they turned their canoes directly toward the head of Lake Huron. It was in June when they began their voyage; in September they landed at the foot of the rapids which had turned Nicolet back

and prevented him from reaching that greatest of fresh-water seas, Lake Superior. Raymbault and Jogues called these rapids the Sault de Sainte Marie (Falls of St. Mary), and that is the name by which they are known to this day.

At the foot of the sault was the village of the band of Chippewas who made this place their summer home ; and



“ At the foot of the sault ” two hundred and fifty years later

on the hills overlooking the river, nearly two thousand savages of other tribes were encamped. It was the custom for great numbers of Indians to gather here every summer to catch the whitefish, which were very plentiful and easily taken. Here was a band of Pottawattomies from Lake Michigan, who had lately been driven from

their homes by a war party of Iroquois. And here were Indians of unknown nations from the more distant West, who related strange tales of a mysterious river and of a warlike people who dwelt near it and whose manners reminded the priests of the wild Tartars of Asia.

Although we have no record of the fact, there is reason to believe that Father Jogues ascended to the head of the rapids and beyond, and that he was probably the first of white men to behold the vast expanse of Lake Superior, extending westward to meet the setting sun. But Father Raymbault was unable to go beyond the sault. Exhausted by the long voyage and the innumerable hardships of it, his naturally feeble body could endure no more. For a few days he lay helpless in the bark wigwam of a friendly Chippewa, while Father Jogues tenderly ministered to his needs.

"I had hoped," said the dying man, "to pass through this wilderness to China; but God in his mercy has set me in the path of heaven!"—and then he passed away.

With tears and prayers Father Jogues laid the body of his brother in the grave, and then, turning his back upon the sault and the lake that lay unexplored beyond it, he set out on his lonely return to the country of the Hurons. Early the next summer he was back at Quebec, 1642
whither he had gone, not to relate the story of his adventures, but to solicit aid for his brethren at the missions and at the Residence of Sainte Marie. Whether it was his intention to revisit the sault we do not know, for events soon took place which changed all his plans.

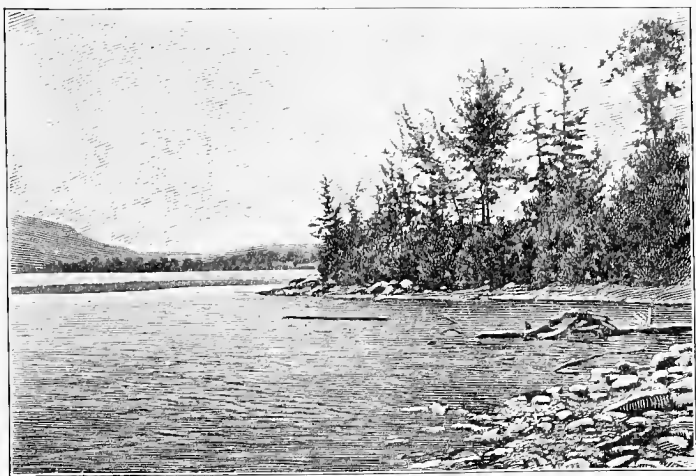
III. THE CAPTIVITY OF FATHER JOGUES

On one of the last days in July, Father Jogues, having completed his work at Quebec, set out on his return to the missions in the Huron country. In his company were three Frenchmen and nearly forty Indians, some
1642 of whom had been converted to the Christian faith. They embarked in twelve light canoes, and, keeping at a safe distance from the south shore, paddled briskly up the St. Lawrence. For two nights they stopped at the new fort at Three Rivers, and on the following day entered that beautiful expansion of the river now known as the Lake of St. Peter.

Suddenly, at a time when they thought least of danger, they were surrounded by a fleet of Iroquois canoes manned by savage warriors yelling the fierce war cries of their nation. The Hurons, frightened out of their senses, paddled to the shore, and some of them escaped into the woods. Father Jogues might have saved himself in the same way, but, when he saw some of his friends in the clutches of pitiless Iroquois, he could not leave them, but gave himself up.

The victorious savages with twenty-two prisoners soon set out on their return to their own country. They were near the mouth of the Richelieu River, and into that stream they paddled their canoes. Their course was southward over the same track that Champlain had followed thirty-four years before, when with his savage friends from the Ottawa he had won the undying hatred of the Iroquois. Entering Lake Champlain, they coasted along its western

shore until they reached, near its southern end, the narrow and turbulent stream that rushes down into it from the west. There, shouldering their canoes, they pushed forward through the woods and over the hills, dragging their prisoners after them, and making no pause until they approached another sheet of water — a small but surpassingly beautiful expanse surrounded on every side by



"The most romantic of all our lakes"

guardian mountains. This, the most romantic of all our lakes, was known among the Indians as Andiarocte, or the Place where the Great Water Ends. It was named by Father Jogues the Lake of the Holy Sacrament; and this name it retained until the English, many years later, changed it to Lake George.

What may have been the feelings of Father Jogues,

first of white men to behold this matchless sheet of water, we cannot even guess. Suffering every kind of indignity from his cruel captors,—his hands mangled by their teeth, his body beaten with clubs, his face and hands



"He was led from town to town"

scorched with hot coals,— he was not in a condition to observe and appreciate the beauties of nature. Moreover, all his thoughts were for his fellow-prisoners, some of whom were in worse case than himself; and, if he looked at all at the placid waters and at the silent, pitying mountains, it was only to contrast God's eternal goodness with the savage cruelty of his creatures.

The Iroquois, after a brief pause, again embarked in their canoes, and, with their faces turned

southward, paddled onward without delay. They landed near the spot where Fort William Henry was to stand in later times. There they hid their canoes in the thickets; and, then, elated by the success of their enterprise, they hastened through the woods to the Mohawk villages, on the banks of the river which is still called by the name of that fierce tribe.

The story of the cruelties which these savages inflicted upon Father Jogues is too painful to relate. For more than a year he was made to suffer every abuse that heathen ingenuity could invent. He was led from town to town, and in each was subjected to new and more terrible tortures. Never for an hour was his life secure; but he was equally ready for any fate, and although death would have been a welcome release from suffering, he gave thanks daily for the preservation of his life. At length, in the autumn of 1643, some Dutch settlers at Albany helped him to escape from his cruel masters. A small sailing vessel carried him down the Hudson to Manhattan; and from that place he shortly afterward took ship for Europe.

In France this gentlest of missionaries was received with the honor and reverence due to one who had borne so much for the cause of God and humanity. The ladies of the court vied with one another in showing him every kindness, and the queen kissed his maimed hands. But by Father Jogues these attentions were counted as nothing, for his heart was set upon returning to Canada to
1644 renew his work among the savages. Early in the following spring he was again sailing up the St. Lawrence.

Two years later, at his own urgent request, he received permission from his Order to go as a missionary to the Mohawk towns where he had suffered so much as a captive. "Ibo et non redibo," — I shall go and shall not return, — he said, as he took his departure. His words were prophetic, for in October of that same year he was slain by the hatchet of a treacherous Mohawk.

IV. THE DISPERSION OF THE HURONS

In the meanwhile, in the country of the Hurons, dreadful days were approaching. Each year the pitiless Iroquois pressed harder and harder upon their feebler
1648 neighbors; and each year the Hurons, in reckoning up, found their strength diminishing and the number of their warriors growing smaller. At length a party of Iro-

quois, mostly Mohawks and Senecas, hastily crossed the St. Lawrence and made a raid into the Huron country, while the warriors of that tribe were absent from home, hunting in the great woods. They burned one of the villages nearest Lake Simcoe, destroyed the cornfields, killed the old men and many of the women and children, and carried many others away as captives.

Six months later a stronger party swooped down among the now thoroughly terrified Hurons. One of the

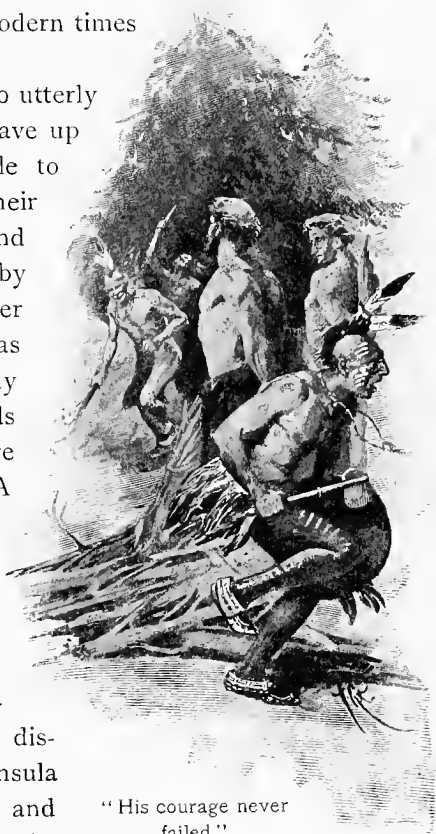
largest of the villages was taken and burned, and havoc and death followed in the path of the fierce invaders. Among the victims of Iroquois fury at this time was Father Brébeuf, whom you will remember as the first of the Jesuit missionaries to the Huron tribes. With Gabriel Lalemant, a young priest noted for his scholarship and refinement, he was made captive by the savages and doomed to die at the stake. He was a man of grand physique and noble bear-



Bust of Father Brébeuf
in Quebec

ing, and in the most terrible of all trials his courage never failed and his sublime manhood never forsook him. While suffering prolonged tortures too dreadful to be described, he maintained such fortitude and valor as no hero of ancient or modern times has surpassed.

The Hurons were now so utterly panic-stricken that they gave up all hope and were unable to offer any resistance to their foes. They deserted and burned their villages, one by one, and then fled wherever they fancied there was promise of safety. Many took refuge on the islands in Georgian Bay, and there perished from famine. A few found their way to Quebec, where, being protected by the French, they felt themselves secure from the further vengeance of their enemies. Some fled to the distant West—to the peninsula between Lakes Michigan and Superior—where their descendants long maintained their tribal existence. Others, more cowardly, became renegades, and joined themselves



“His courage never
failed”

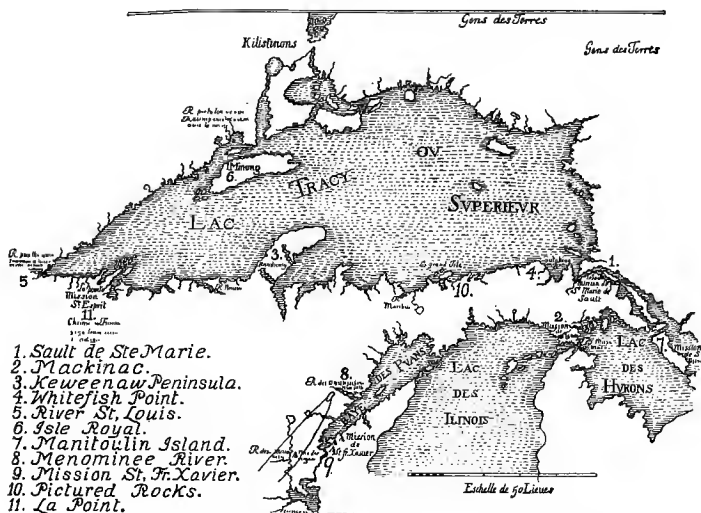
to the Iroquois tribes south of Lake Ontario, and became more savage than the Mohawks themselves.

Thus the Huron nation ceased to exist. The country which it had possessed for an unknown period was overrun and ravaged by its foes, and the places which had been occupied by cultivated fields and populous towns were overgrown by briars and trees, and lost in the trackless wilderness.

What could the Jesuit missionaries find to do in this land of desolation? They abandoned and burned their Residence of Sainte Marie ; and such of them as survived the fury of the Iroquois sought other fields of labor, chiefly among the scattered tribes of the West.

THE FOURTH OF THE GREAT LAKES

I. TWO DARING FUR TRADERS



Copy of a map drawn by Jesuit missionaries in 1672

A FEW years after the dispersal of the Hurons, two Frenchmen of noble descent made a voyage of exploration into the distant West. The elder of these men was Medard Chouart, commonly known as Sieur des Grosseilliers; the younger was his brother-in-law, Pierre d'Esprit, Sieur Radisson. They had already had a long and varied experience in the wilderness and

among savage men. Radisson when a mere boy had been taken captive by the Iroquois and adopted into one of their tribes, and during his stay with them had learned much Indian lore and acquired an intense passion for the woods. Grosseilliers was one of those unlicensed fur traders who ranged the wilderness and traded with the savages in defiance of the law which gave the control of such traffic to a favored company holding a license from the king. He had already made more than one visit to the northern shores of Lake Huron, and had paddled his canoe into almost every inlet and creek between the country of the Nipissings and the Sault Sainte Marie.

From their Indian friends, Grosseilliers and Radisson had heard vague stories of a great western river which flowed, not into the Lakes, but into some distant sea. Jesuit priests had also reported that it was only nine days' journey from Green Bay to the water that lies between America and China. The two men at length determined to make a voyage to the distant West, not so much to see if these stories were true, as to find
1654 whether there was a field there for profitable trade. It was past midsummer when they started from Three Rivers; but with strong, lithe Indians to paddle their canoes they made good speed on rivers and lakes, and before the autumn leaves had begun to fall they had passed the Strait of Mackinac and were coasting the northern shore of Lake Michigan.

The story of their adventures is by no means clear, and historians are not agreed concerning their whereabouts during the next two years. It is quite certain, however,

that they crossed the Baie des Puans (Green Bay) which Nicolet had discovered twenty years before, and landed on the narrow peninsula which lies between that body of water and Lake Michigan. There they were welcomed kindly by a band of Pottawattomies, and with these Indians they spent the winter.

In the spring they again embarked in their canoes,



“A great flotilla of fur-laden canoes”

pushed on to the head of the bay, and visited the spot where Nicolet in his flowery robe had astonished the nation of the Winnebagoes. They paddled slowly up the Fox River, now swollen by April rains, and at length reached the country of the Mascoutins. There they remained during a part of the summer, but whether

they ventured farther westward at that time we have no certain information. They may have crossed the short portage to the Wisconsin and floated down to the Mississippi, but of this there is no plain record. Radisson, many years later, wrote, "We were four months in our voyage, doing nothing but go from river to river;" and yet he leaves us in doubt as to whether he is telling of this voyage or of a later one.

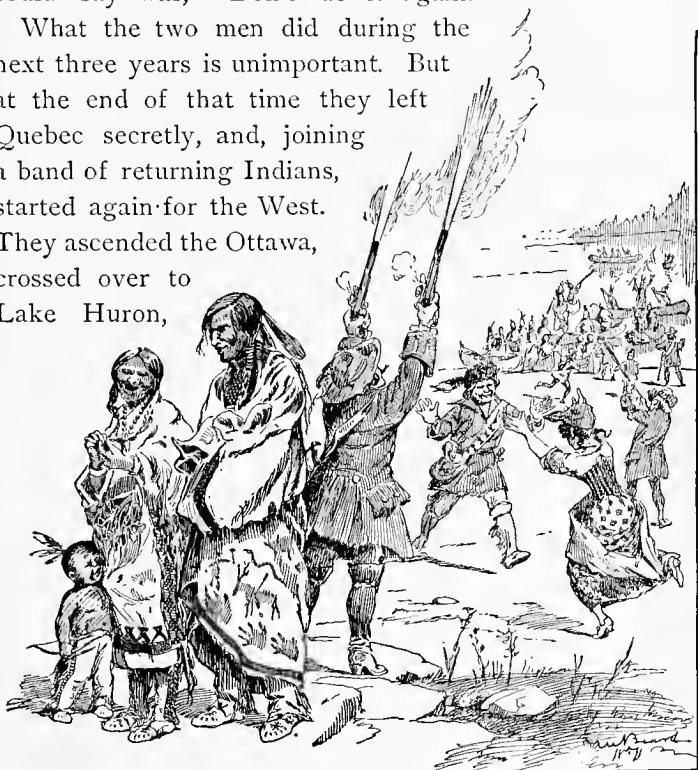
About two years after the departure of the adventurous traders from Three Rivers, a great flotilla of fur-laden
1656 canoes descended the Ottawa, shot the rapids above Montreal, and continued its course onward to Quebec. The canoes were paddled by Chippewa Indians from Sault Sainte Marie, and the furs were those which Radisson and Grosseilliers had gathered in the distant West, from the tribes on the northern shores of Lake Michigan and in the forests farther away.

For many months the fear of the Iroquois had prevented the friendly nations from visiting the posts on the St. Lawrence, and no furs had been brought to the markets. The one business in which every person in New France was interested seemed to be destroyed. Without the fur trade there would soon be no New France.

It is easy to understand, therefore, the warm welcome which the returning traders received at Quebec. Guns were fired from the fort, and traders and soldiers and servants ran down to the water side to see the rich cargoes of furs that were to restore prosperity to New France. Radisson and Grosseilliers had bought these furs without license or permission from the government,

and were therefore liable to punishment. But every one was so well pleased that the king's officers and the licensed traders dared not lift a finger, and all they could say was, "Don't do it again."

What the two men did during the next three years is unimportant. But at the end of that time they left Quebec secretly, and, joining a band of returning Indians, started again for the West. They ascended the Ottawa, crossed over to Lake Huron,



"The warm welcome which the returning traders received"

paddled wearily over the route now so familiar to them, and reached in due time the villages of the fishing Indians at the foot of the sault. After resting there a few

days, they carried their canoes around the rapids and prepared to launch them on the waters of the lake above. It is very possible that, since the discovery of this great water by Father Jogues, other white men had stood upon that very place and had gazed with questioning wonder upon that mightiest of all our inland seas. It is even asserted that, during their former expedition, Radisson and Groseilliers had paddled many miles along the shore of this lake, making friends with the savages whom they met, and buying furs wherever they could find them. Be this as it may, they were now about to begin the first voyage upon Lake Superior of which we have any actual record.

With four Huron Indians as canoemen the traders embarked, pushing boldly onward in a westerly direction, and never losing sight of the woods and low hills on their left. They rounded Whitefish Point, and after some days passed the famous Pictured Rocks, which, even in our time, excite the wonder of all who come within sight of them. They carried their canoes across the narrow neck which joins Keweenaw to the mainland, and launched them on the western side of that peninsula. Still following the south shore, they at length reached a group of green islands seeming to guard the entrance to a beautiful bay. They turned into the bay, and, near its head, landed upon a small triangular bit of ground which the French afterward called La Pointe, not far from the site of the present city of Ashland. It was a pleasant spot, and the voyagers decided to make it for a while their home and headquarters, perhaps a sort of trading post where the neighboring savages might bring their wares. They cut

down trees and built a rude hut of logs, which they covered with bark and brushwood. Then, to protect the place from surprise by prowling Indians, they planted a row of tall stakes across the head of the little peninsula, and on the side most exposed to attack they piled underbrush and branches of trees, among which were twined a number of cords attached to little bells. This humble hut, so strangely fortified, is well worth remembering, for in truth it was the first dwelling built by white men within the limits of the Old Northwest.

After staying in this place for a few weeks, the traders hid their canoes and goods in secret places in the woods, and set out to visit some kinsfolk of the Hurons who were said to be living in the interior, many miles away. For six days they traveled in a southerly direction, and on the seventh found, far hidden in the wilderness, the little band for which they sought.

These people, whom the French called Petuns, or Tobacco Indians, because they raised tobacco, were a tribe of the Hurons who had sought in this distant land a refuge from the fury of the Iroquois. They



“The first dwelling built by
white men”

told the two Frenchmen of their sad adventures since being driven from their homes on the shores of the Mer Douce.

In company with some Ottawas, they had gone first to the islands near the entrance of Green Bay ; but hardly had they put up a few rude shelters when word came that the Iroquois were on their track. Terrified, they fled to the mainland, and, with their faces turned westward, made their way through the wilderness until they reached a clear-flowing stream (the Wisconsin) whose banks were bordered by groves of giant trees. There they built themselves canoes in which they floated until they reached another and much nobler river—a river as beautiful and grand as the St. Lawrence. They ascended this river a few leagues and entered a smaller stream, the Ayoës (Upper Iowa) which flows into it from the west. It was a pleasant stream, and buffaloes and other wild game were plentiful ; but the land was bare of trees, and the Hurons loved the woods. They therefore returned to the great river and paddled slowly northward against the current until they came into the country of a warlike nation called the Dakotas or Sioux. At first the Sioux were friendly and encouraged them to make their homes among them. But soon difficulties arose, and the fugitives were obliged to seek some other abiding place. Going back, down the great river, they saw entering it on the left a forest-bordered stream which seemed to offer the means of refuge from both Sioux and Iroquois. Near the sources of this river the Hurons decided to stop and make new homes. They put up a few lodges, began a small clearing,

and felt that, after so many weary years, they were safe from their foes; and it was here that Radisson and Grosseilliers found them. Their Ottawa friends who had shared their wanderings did not stop with them, but continued their journey northward to the shores of the great lake.

The two traders remained with the fugitive Hurons several weeks, hunting and trapping and making long journeys in various directions. But it is to be regretted that they left us no clear account of their adventures, and we shall never know how far they went into the interior of the country.

Radisson long afterward wrote a brief, hazy narrative of some of their explorations, but whether his story relates to this journey or to the earlier one from Green Bay, there is some doubt. "We went," he says, "to the great river which divides itself in two where the Hurons had retired. The river is called the Forked, because it has two branches, one toward the west, the other toward the south, which we believe runs toward Mexico."

Could this mysterious stream have been the Mississippi? In another place he relates that they embarked upon a "great river" which flowed southward, and that, after journeying for many days, they reached a land where the air is always warm, and the climate "finer than that of Italy."

From their Huron friends the traders heard many wonderful stories about the Nadouechiouec, or Sioux, who roamed over the vast treeless plains of the West and had many customs unknown to the red men of the East. They were said to be as warlike and cruel as the

Iroquois, and were the terror of all the neighboring tribes. The two Frenchmen supposed that they were now quite near the borders of China, for the Sioux seemed to them to resemble in many respects the Tartars of eastern Asia. They were therefore anxious to make the acquaintance of these people and learn more about their habits and the country in which they lived. And so, late in autumn, they left the Huron settlement and started in a north-westerly course through the pathless wilderness toward the country of the Sioux. To woodsmen like Radisson and Grosseilliers the way was not difficult, and they soon arrived in the well-watered region which lies between the St. Croix River and the upper waters of the Mississippi. There they were met by a small band of Sioux who welcomed them to their country, and led them to their village on the shore of a little lake. They remained with their savage friends all winter, hunting and fishing, and learning something of the Sioux language, which was very different from that of any other Indians they had met.

As soon as the snows were melted in the spring they returned to La Pointe, where they found their goods and canoes just as they had left them; but the little hut had suffered from the storms of winter and required rebuilding. Here they rested for some time; but game was scarce and food was hard to find, and so in early summer they again embarked in their canoes and set out for a further exploration of the lake. With their faithful Huron canoe-men they followed the windings of the shore, stopping now and then to trade with the strolling savages whose hunting grounds were there. They reached the western

end of the lake, and in the prairie region beyond met with a band of Sioux called Poulaks, with whom they made a short and not unpleasant stay. Some of these Indians lived in tents made of skins and others in houses of turf;



“ Stopping now and then to trade ”

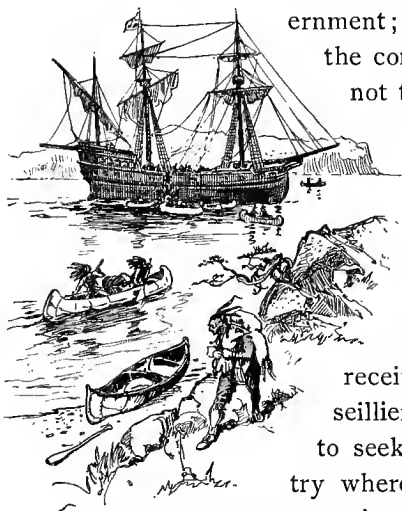
and, as wood was very scarce, they made fire with coal which they found in the earth.

Radisson and Grosseilliers would have been glad to go farther into the interior; but the short summer was now more than half gone, and they were anxious to return home before the coming of cold weather. 1660

Everything seemed to favor them, the journey was

made without mishap or delay, and before the end of August they were in Montreal. They brought with them sixty canoes, paddled by three hundred Indians, and laden with all kinds of precious furs and peltries.

Their reception this time was not a pleasant one. They were guilty of violating the law; they had traded with the Indians without license from the government; they had boldly disobeyed the commands of the king's officers not to return to the Great Lakes.



In Hudson Bay

Their entire store of furs, which they had collected with so much labor and peril, was therefore seized upon by the officers and confiscated for the king.

Can we wonder that after receiving such treatment, Grosseilliers and Radisson were ready to seek service in some other country where they would be dealt with more justly? They went first to New England and then to London, where they aroused much interest in the fur trade of North America. They also persuaded some English merchants and noblemen that it would be easy to discover a short
 1668 passage to the South Sea by sailing around the northern part of the continent. At length a ship was fitted out for them and they made a voyage to Hudson Bay, returning with a rich cargo of furs

and glowing accounts of the country they had visited. Two years later, largely through their influence, a trading company was chartered, — the “Hudson’s Bay Company,” — which grew to control, and still controls, the greater part of the fur trade in America.

II. THE MANITOU OF THE COPPER MINES

No other Europeans had penetrated so far into the interior of North America as Radisson and Grosseilliers, and we may safely infer that when they first returned to the St. Lawrence they related many strange tales of what they had seen and heard. Everybody in Canada became greatly interested in the newly found regions bordering upon Lake Superior, and much was said about their wealth, not only in furs, but in precious metals.

There was no doubt now as to the place where Etienne Brulé’s famous lump of pure copper had been found. In a little book written at this time and published in Paris, it was stated that “in Lake Superior there is a great island which is fifty leagues in circumference, in which there is a very beautiful mine of copper.”

It was also said that along the shores of the lake large pieces of pure copper could be picked up, and that in one place some Frenchmen had seen a single mass of the metal which they thought would weigh more than eight hundred pounds. The Indians knew where many rich mines might be found, but they would not tell any one, lest they should offend the manitou, or spirit, that guarded these treasures.

“A long time ago,” they said, “men knew nothing

about this precious metal. They saw it lying upon the ground, but regarded it no more than the worthless stones that are found everywhere. One day four hunters in their canoe were driven by a storm far out into the lake. They saw an island before them and hastened to land upon it. There they built a fire, and, having caught a fish, they thought they would boil it for supper. Their only

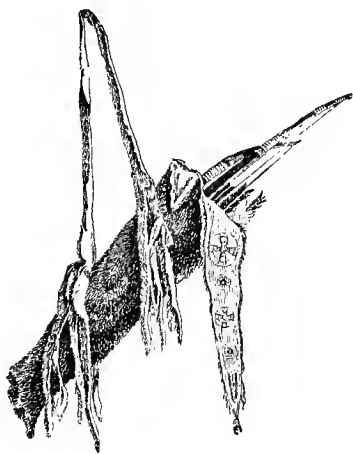
kettle was of bark, and into this they put the fish and some water. Then they picked up the stones that lay on the shore and heated them red hot and threw them in. They were unlike any other stones they had ever used in this way; they were pure copper. As the



“The island seemed full of lynxes”

yellow pieces fell into the kettle, fearful sounds were heard in the air, and threatening voices cried out from among the trees. The flames of their camp fire blazed up high and became green as grass, and the smoke that rose from it was full of dancing creatures unlike any that had ever before been seen. The hunters ate their fish in great dread and then hastened to embark in their canoe. The island seemed full of lynxes and hares as large as dogs, and the men were glad to get away from it; but they took with them some of the shining pieces of copper. As they paddled from the shore, a voice called after them in tones of thunder, ‘Who are these thieves that steal my children’s playthings?’ It was the manitou of the island, or

else the god of the waters. The hunters were almost overcome with terror, and no sooner had they reached the mainland than three of them died. The fourth, pursued by fearful phantoms, ran into the forest and after many days came to his own village. There he told the wonderful story, but while he was yet speaking he fell back dead. Do you wonder that the Indians will not tell you where the copper may be found?"

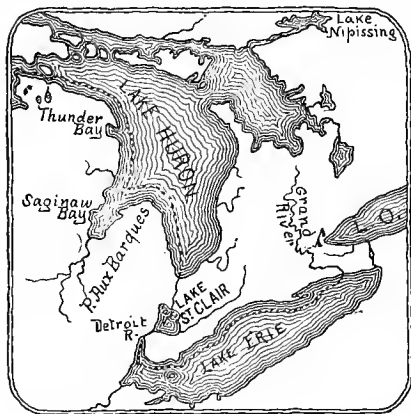


THE FIFTH OF THE GREAT LAKES

I. THE HIDDEN WATER

THE Jesuit missionaries and the fur traders in the country of the Hurons had become well acquainted with all that region which lies between Lake Ontario and the head waters of the Ottawa. But southward and west-

ward they dared not go, so great was their fear of the Iroquois whose war parties were known to infest that region. From the time of Champlain's earliest visit to the St. Lawrence, frequent reports had come to the French of a great inland sea which was said to lie between



the Mer Douce of the Hurons and Lake Ontario.

Indeed, from the vague descriptions given by the Indians, maps had been drawn showing the possible location and extent of that unknown water—marvelous waterfalls at its outlet, and its northern and southern shores of indefinite extent stretching in hazy lines to the right and the left and

ending in mysterious and unknown regions. It is not unlikely that some daring woods ranger had visited these shores, but, if so, he had carried back to civilization no account of what he had seen.

The lake remained unknown to Europeans—as completely removed from the knowledge of the world as were the mighty rivers which, hidden deep in the wilderness, were waiting silently for the coming of their discoverers. From time to time meager reports were brought in by wandering savages, vague hints were dropped of a vast sea in the midst of an uninhabited region. But these reports only awakened curiosity and spurred to no determined effort to discover the hidden water.

II. LOUIS JOLIET

After the return of Grosseilliers and Radisson, there was scarcely a summer that did not see some bold trader or some zealous missionary among the Indian tribes on the shores of the great upper lake. All brought back the same story of hidden treasures of copper; and some did more, for they carried with them nuggets of the yellow metal which they had picked up or had bought from the natives.

The intendant (general manager) of Canada, Jean Baptiste Talon, hearing of these things, was fired with the idea of discovering the secrets which he believed still
lay concealed in the lake regions of the West. 1667

Was there really a passageway by water to the South Sea? If so, he must find it. Was it indeed true that

vast mines of copper existed along the shores of the upper lake? If so, he must know about them. After having studied these questions with much care, he went to France and laid the whole matter before Colbert, the prime minister of the king.

"By all means," said Colbert, "discover those deposits of copper and find some way by which to send the metal to France. If there is any truth in the stories which you tell me, this will be of far greater importance than the discovery of a new route to China."

When Talon returned to Canada, he sought out Louis Joliet, the son of a wagonmaker at Quebec, and
1668 intrusted to him the task of exploring the shores of the upper lake and of discovering the hidden treasures of that remote region.

Joliet was then twenty-four years of age. He had been educated by the Jesuits, and from his boyhood had expected to be a priest. But the fur trade proved to be more attractive to him than the Church; and so, after having fitted himself for the priestly vocation, he at the last hour changed his mind and decided to become a trader and adventurer. The intendant knew him to be a man of rare good sense, cautious, and at the same time fearless of danger; and he selected for his companion a young voyageur named Peré, who had spent much of his life on the rivers and lakes of the western wilderness.

The two explorers were sent out without any definite instructions as to what they should do or how long they should stay. In such matters they were to be guided by their own judgment.

III. THE FIRST VOYAGERS ON LAKE ERIE

Of the adventures of Joliet and Peré in quest of the hidden mines of copper we know but little, for neither of them left any written account of their long and hazardous voyage. It is enough to say that, after 1669 spending a whole summer on the shores of Lake Superior, they had found no more of the ruddy metal than they could easily carry in their canoes. They therefore decided to give up the search and, if possible, make some new discoveries elsewhere. From the Indian tribes along the shore of the lake they had heard vague references to a great water that lay far to the west and south; but whether this water was a lake, an arm of the ocean, or a broad river, they could obtain no definite information.

Joliet was anxious to push on by the nearest route from Lake Superior and discover this water; but the summer was now well advanced, and he agreed with Peré that it would be wiser to postpone such enterprise until another year.

The two explorers therefore turned in another direction. They retraced their way to the outlet of the lake, passed the Sault Sainte Marie, where there was now a Jesuit mission, and paddled down the broad river until it lost itself in the upper reaches of Lake Huron. Then, turning to the right, they followed in the track of Jean Nicolet along the wooded shores of the upper peninsula. They passed, on their left, the rocky islet of Mackinac, and they saw the sea of Lake Michigan stretching southward farther than eye could reach. They entered the Baie des Puans — Green Bay — and pushed onward until

they came to the mouth of the Fox River. The Winnebagoes whom Nicolet had found dwelling there had removed farther inland, and other Indians had their bark wigwams near the head of the bay. With these Joliet and *Peré* smoked the pipe of peace, and from them they heard still other stories of a great water farther west — no doubt the same of which Nicolet had been told, and which he declared to be only three days' journey from the portage of the Fox.

The two explorers did not remain long at Green Bay. Embarking again in their canoe, they retraced their way as far as Mackinac. They then crossed the strait, and, holding close to the western shore of Lake Huron, pushed boldly along through unknown waters toward the southeast. No other white men had ever followed this route in returning to the St. Lawrence.

They passed Thunder Bay and the much broader entrance to Saginaw Bay. They rounded Point aux Barques, and skirted the green shores southward until the lake had narrowed to a strait, and they entered the stream that has since been called the St. Clair River. Following this sluggish current, they passed onward into the shallow lake of the same name, and thence into the broad channel of the Detroit, from which they finally emerged upon the sleepy waters of the Lake of the Eries. It was thus that the fifth and last of the Great Lakes was discovered and entered by white men. Fifty-four
1669 years had elapsed since Joseph le Caron had first beheld the *Mer Douce* of the Hurons, and thirty-five since Jean Nicolet had passed the Strait of Mackinac and paddled his canoe on Lake Michigan.

IV. A REMARKABLE MEETING

Joliet had not found the copper mines as Talon had desired, but he had made a discovery of far greater importance. He had found a new way to the distant West—a way which would shortly supersede the toilsome route up the Ottawa River and across the lake of the Nipissings.

After passing the Detroit, the explorers turned to the left and skirted the north shore of Lake Erie. They moved with the greatest caution, for they were now near the haunts of the dreaded Iroquois. With each hour's progress the fears of their guides became greater; and so, instead of following the shore to the point where the lake finds an outlet by way of Niagara, they turned into Grand River and made their way up that stream to the place where it approaches nearest to the western end of Lake Ontario. Then, shouldering their canoe, they pushed through the woods to a village of friendly Indians near the site of the present city of Hamilton.

A pleasant surprise was in store for them. Scarcely had they set foot in the village when they learned that another party of Frenchmen had just arrived from the east. One of these men proved to be Robert Cavelier de la Salle, a young man of great ambition, who had lately come to Canada with the intention of thoroughly exploring the rivers, the lakes, and the woods of the unknown West. With him were two Sulpician priests, Fathers Dollier and Galinée, and a number of hired men, interpreters, and Indian guides—twenty-three persons in

all, and seven canoes. La Salle was bent on discovering a river whose sources were said to be in the forest south of the lakes. The Sulpicians were seeking for a place where they could establish a mission without trespassing upon the territory already occupied by the Jesuits.

All listened with the utmost interest to Joliet's story of his voyage through the lakes. He showed them a map



“A pleasant surprise was in store for them”

of the route which he had followed, and told them of the various tribes of Indians he had visited. The priests were delighted to hear of regions and peoples hitherto unknown, and believed that Providence had miraculously opened new fields for the exercise of their mission-

ary zeal. They therefore determined to go on to the upper lakes, following the route by which Joliet had come; and being told of the benighted Pottawattomies somewhere in the vast region beyond the Mer Douce, they resolved to carry to those people the knowledge of the cross.

On the last day of September the three parties separated. La Salle, with his Indian guides, started southward;

1669 the Sulpician fathers began their long journey into the wild Northwest; and Joliet and his companion betook themselves to their canoe and continued their homeward voyage along the north shore of Lake Ontario.

HOW THE GREAT RIVERS WERE EXPLORED

THE BEAUTIFUL RIVER

I. LA SALLE

ROBERT CAVELIER, *Sieur de la Salle*, was a native of the old Norman city of Rouen, and his father had been one of the wealthiest merchants of France. The young man had been educated with great care by the Jesuits, and it was supposed that when he came to the proper age he would join himself and his fortunes with them. But, being of a restless nature, and his mind full of ambitious dreams, he chose another career.

His elder brother, the Abbé Jean Cavelier, was a priest of St. Sulpice and had been in Canada for several years. Through him La Salle heard wonderful stories of the endless forests, the great lakes, and the hidden rivers of North America. He heard, too, of the wealth that might be gained by trading with the Indians, and of the fame that might be won by making new discoveries in that



Sieur de la Salle

land of marvels. And so, at the age of twenty-three, he left his home and sailed for Canada, resolved to find there a fortune and the long-dreamed-of northern passage to the South Sea and the golden East.

He stopped neither at Quebec nor at Three Rivers, but went directly to Montreal. For the island at the meeting of the rivers was now no longer a solitude, 1667 but the center of many commercial and religious activities. Near the spot where Cartier had landed and where Champlain had planned his Place Royale, a fortified town had been built. It had been founded by religious devotees from France, just one year before the birth of La Salle. These people had begun by building a church and a hospital, after which they had invited settlers to come and put up houses and make homes in the near neighborhood. Then it had become necessary to build a palisade around the dwellings and to construct a fort that was strong enough to protect the place from the attacks of any enemy. And very soon a busy, thriving town had sprung up not far from the site of the ancient Hochelaga.

The religious association which had brought all this about had soon given place to a corporation of priests called the Seminary of St. Sulpice. This corporation was the owner of all the lands on the island and in its neighborhood; it made the laws for the government of the settlers; it regulated and controlled all the affairs of the town and the country around it. One of the Sulpicians or priests composing this powerful corporation was La Salle's brother, the Abbé Cavelier; and it was

through his persuasion that the young man made Montreal the starting-place for the accomplishment of his ambitious projects.

II. LA CHINE

It was a strange assemblage of people that La Salle saw when he landed in Montreal. Here were priests and nuns in great numbers, Jesuit missionaries just returned from the haunts of savagery, French fur traders, noblemen and ladies late from the gay circles of Paris, voyageurs from the inland lakes and rivers, soldiers, half-naked Indians from the north and west—and even a sprinkling of Iroquois from the south, for that nation had recently made a treaty of peace with the Canadian governor. 1667

The Sulpician brotherhood welcomed the young adventurer warmly, for they looked upon him as a recruit to their ranks and one who would be useful to them in their management of public affairs. They did not suspect that he had plans of his own, which he intended to carry out whether favorable to their interests or not. Being just now free from the dread of the Iroquois, they were anxious to establish a line of settlements westward along the St. Lawrence to serve as outposts to Montreal; and they needed but little persuasion to induce them to grant to young La Salle for his own use a large tract of land at the head of the rapids about eight miles above the fort. The land was covered with dense woods, but it was just the place for a trading post, being near the upper end of the island and right in the way of the flotillas of canoes

as they came down the St. Lawrence laden with furs for the markets below.

La Salle began work without delay. He gave small plots of ground to as many settlers as would become his



La Salle's house at Lachine in 1900

tenants, and with their aid he proceeded to cut down the
1668 trees and clear away the underbrush. By the
end of the next year he had built a village with
a strong palisade around it, and his people had planted
ten or twelve acres of corn.

From the windows of his house La Salle could overlook
the river, seeing on his left the rushing rapids which had

daunted the enterprise of Cartier and Champlain, and on his right the beautiful expanse known as Lake St. Louis. At this time his mind was full of projects for discovering the long-sought passage to the South Sea, and he looked upon this clearing on the banks of the St. Lawrence as his first station on the road to China. His enemies, of whom there were soon many enough, laughed at his pretentious dreams, and in derision called his estate *La Chine* (which is the French way of saying China); and to this day the Sault St. Louis, which there begins its grand rush to the lower level of the river, is known as *Lachine Rapids*.

But it must not be supposed that La Salle, while overseeing this work of clearing and building and planting, was forgetful of other enterprises. He was not idle for a moment. He studied the languages and habits of the Indians—not only of the Algonquin and Huron tribes, but of the Iroquois also. He made a journey up the Ottawa, talked with traders and priests and voyageurs, and at last made up his mind that the future water route across the continent was more likely to be found toward the southwest than elsewhere.

He was more than ever confirmed in this idea by some Iroquois chiefs of the Seneca tribe who visited his settlement the following winter. They told him that, by going into the wilderness, a little way beyond their own country, one might come to a great and beautiful river flowing toward the southwest.

The name of that stream was Ohio, an Indian word, which in French meant *La Belle Rivière*, or in English

the Beautiful River. The Indians declared that a voyage from its source to the place where it emptied into the salt sea could not be accomplished in the swiftest canoe within a shorter period than eight months. Such a voyage, they said, would be attended with many difficulties, and he who should once descend the river could scarcely hope ever to return.

La Salle questioned the Senecas very closely, and there is reason to suppose that they told him much more than they knew. After studying over the matter he concluded that this mighty river of the Ohio must have its outlet in the Vermilion Sea, now called the Gulf of California, and that through it might be found the desired passageway to the western ocean. He decided, therefore, to lose no further time, but to begin his explorations in search of that river as soon as possible.

He visited Courcelle, the governor of Canada, and Talon, the intendant, and told them his views and plans. They listened to his reasoning and were easily convinced; and the governor gave him a letter authorizing him to discover the Ohio and follow it to its mouth, taking possession of the lands on both sides of it in the name of the king of France.

But La Salle had no ready money, and none of his friends were willing to invest anything for the promotion of so uncertain an enterprise. The only thing to be done, therefore, was to sell his estate of La Chine and hazard everything upon the success of this first venture. With a part of the money so obtained he bought four canoes and supplies for a long voyage, and hired fourteen men

as canoemen and guides. Two Sulpician priests, Dollier and Galinée, eager to establish a mission in some quarter unoccupied by the Jesuits, were just ready to start to the distant West, having with them three canoes and half a dozen assistants. These gladly agreed to bear La Salle company, at least for a part of the way.

III. LA BELLE RIVIÈRE

On the 6th of July the little company embarked at La Chine, and paddled up the St. Lawrence. It was a time of peace with the Indian tribes, and hence they were safe from the Iroquois bands 1669 who usually patrolled the woods on the south bank of the river. At length they reached Lake Ontario, and, turning to the left, skirted its southern shore. After seven weeks of toil and exposure they entered Irondequoit Bay, a few miles east of the place where now stands the city of Rochester.

They landed, and La Salle, with Father Galinée and a few others, made his way to a village of the Senecas some distance inland. He hoped that among these Indians he would find guides to show him the most direct way to the head waters of the Ohio. But his knowledge of the Iroquois language was not very perfect, and the wily savages either could not or would not understand what he said. Nevertheless they made a feast for their visitors, and tried to entertain them by torturing a prisoner whom a band of their braves had captured in the far interior.

Only one of the Indians was willing or able to give

them any information. He told La Salle that it was folly to try to reach the Beautiful River, for the savage people who haunted its shores would surely kill him. When questioned further he said that he did not know much about the river in question, but that he had heard of a region in the south where there were no trees, and of a fertile country hard by a noble stream that flowed into the salt sea; but whether this stream was the Ohio or some other river whose name was unknown, he could not say.

Before the feast was fairly at an end most of the Seneca braves were wildly drunk, and La Salle and his companions were glad to retire and hasten back to their canoes. The party now moved on, following the shore of the lake toward the west. On the third day they passed the mouth of a great river and heard the roar of a distant cataract—the cataract of Niagara. At last, late in September, they came to an Indian village at the extreme western end of the lake. There, to their great surprise, they were met, as we have already learned, by the two explorers Joliet and Peré, returning from an expedition to the upper lakes.

In this village was a prisoner awaiting the day when he should be tortured to death for the amusement of his captors. He was said to belong to a distant tribe known as Shawnees—a tribe whose home was in the depths of the forest on the banks of the undiscovered Ohio. La Salle eagerly sought this prisoner and questioned him about the hidden river. The savage gave him a glowing account of the beautiful stream and of the country through which it flows, but told him that

it would require six weeks of hard traveling to reach it. If now the French chief could only secure his freedom he would guide him thither by the easiest and shortest route. La Salle hastened to ask the villagers to give him their captive; and after he had appeased them with presents, the grateful Shawnee was delivered into his hands.

After parting with Joliet and the Sulpician priests on

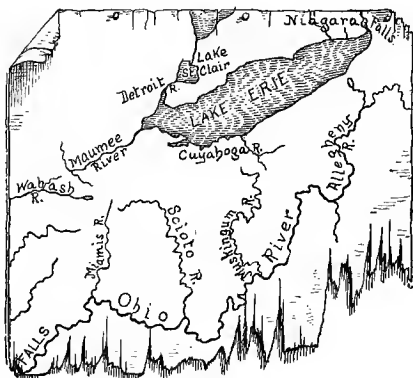


“The grateful Shawnee was delivered into his hands”

that last day of September, La Salle with his canoemen and his Shawnee guide directed his course southward. But by what route he went we are entirely ignorant; for now for several months he dropped, 1669 as it were, out of sight. It seems quite certain, however, that, early in the following year, he discovered the river Ohio, and that he floated down its broad current as far as to the falls where the city of Louisville now stands.

Some suppose that he crossed the narrow divide on the southeast of Lake Erie, launched his canoes on Chautauqua Lake, and thence, floating down the Allegheny, found the Ohio at the place of its true beginning. Others think that he followed the south shore of Lake Erie to the mouth of the Cuyahoga River, and then, going up that stream and making a short portage, he found an easy passage to the Muskingum and through it to the Ohio. Of this, however, we have no certain information, and shall never be able to do more than guess at the truth of it.

La Salle's men, it is said, deserted him in the wilderness, and it is not known that one of them ever returned to Canada. Some, however, made their way to the Dutch settlements on the Hudson, and others were heard of afterwards in New England. But La Salle was not daunted by difficulties. He went back alone to Montreal, still cherishing the hope, not only of discovering the secrets of the Northwest, but of making his discoveries profitable both to himself and to France.



ON THE UPPER LAKES

I. MÉNARD

SOUTH of Lake Superior and far toward its western extremity there were a number of fugitive Hurons and vagrant Ottawas, who had fled thither from the fury of the Iroquois. So utterly crushed and terrified had these people been after the destruction of their ancient homes near the shores of the Mer Douce, that they seemed to think of nothing but to hide themselves away in places too remote to be discovered by their relentless foes. Not far from the shores of Chequamegon Bay, in Wisconsin, the Ottawas had finally made a halt; and, being pleased with the place, they built there a few huts and began to make some small clearings. The Hurons had stopped in the marshy wilderness, many miles farther south.

The first white men to discover these people in their new homes were the French traders, Grosseilliers and Radisson, while making their famous tour of Lake Superior about the year 1659. These men carried back to Quebec the story of the flight of the fugitives and of their poverty and friendlessness in a strange land. The story was listened to with eagerness by the Jesuit fathers, and René Ménard, a priest who had seen years of the hardest service among the Hurons and the Iroquois, was selected to be

the apostle of these unfortunate people. The heart of the good father was moved with pity for the wretched heathen, living and dying like cowering beasts in the forest.

"Yes, I will go," he said; "I will give my life for them."

When the Indians who had come down with Grosseilliers and Radisson were ready to return to their homes, Father Ménard asked and obtained leave to accompany them. With him went his servant, Jean Guérin, and seven other Frenchmen, intent upon trading with the distant tribes.

The journey, as we know, was a long one, and Ménard was little able to endure the labor and privations which it entailed. He was fifty-seven years old, but the toil and suffering which he had already endured among the sav-
1660 ages had whitened his hair and enfeebled his body until he seemed a venerable man of eighty. Yet his strong will buoyed him up, and after a few days' rest at the Sault Sainte Marie he was ready and anxious to hasten forward.

It was the intention of the party to proceed to La Pointe, the place where Grosseilliers and Radisson had built their hut, but, on account of an accident to one of their canoes, Ménard with his servant went on shore near the head of Keweenaw Bay. He at once sought out a band of vagabond Ottawas, who had set up their lodges a short distance inland. But these degraded people did not feel that they needed such sympathy and help as the missionary had come to offer them. While treating him

with some show of friendship, they laughed at his kindly concern for their souls, and refused to listen to his religious teaching.

The winter came, very cold and cheerless in the wretched huts of the Ottawas. Father Ménard, himself the soul of kindness, met with nothing but rebuffs and cruel neglect. The coldness of the north wind hurtling through the thin walls of his bark hut was less distressing than the utter indifference, the thanklessness, and folly of the savages whom he wished so much to help. He could not make a single convert — scarcely could he win a single friend.

As soon as the spring was well advanced, Ménard determined to go in quest of the Hurons who lived a hundred miles southward. It was the first of July, however, before he was able to set out, 1661 taking with him Jean Guérin and some Huron hunters as guides. The ground was soft, and the streams were swollen from recent rains. There was no road — not even a footpath; and the way led through tangled thickets and treacherous marshes. The feeble missionary was unable to keep up with his guides, and he and his servant were left behind. The two men contrived to follow the trail of their faithless friends until they reached a small lake whose outlet was a southward flowing river. Here, after fifteen days of aimless wandering, they found a canoe which they thought had been left there for their use. They embarked, and floated with the stream — it was the main branch of the upper Wisconsin. The change was very grateful to Father Ménard, whose strength could

not have carried him much farther. Sitting at his ease in the bow of the canoe, he murmured hymns of thanksgiving for the mercies he had received.

Thus they had floated for fifty miles or more, when they saw rapids ahead, strong and turbulent, tumbling wildly over rocks and among drifts of fallen timber.

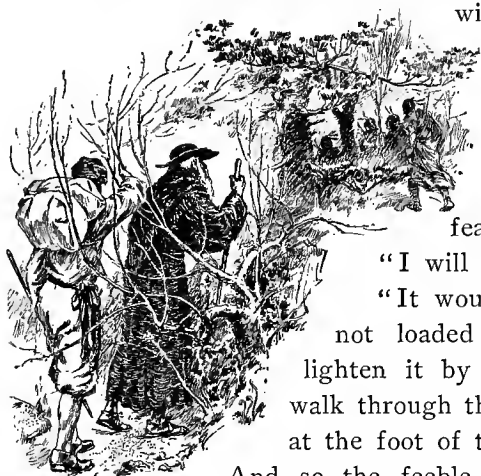
"Do you think you can guide the canoe safely through that fearful turmoil?"

"I will try, master."

"It would be easier if it were not loaded so heavily. Let me lighten it by going ashore. I will walk through the woods and meet you at the foot of the falls."

And so the feeble man was put ashore.

But there was no trail around the rapids. The way was obstructed by thick underwoods, briars, trailing vines, quagmires, and fallen trees. At last he found what seemed to be a faint path; he followed it; it led farther and farther from the river. The sound of the rushing rapids was soon lost to his ear. Night was coming on; Father Ménard stumbled along through the darkening woods; he listened, but the silence of the forest was about him; he called, but received no answer. And now the path disappeared, there was nothing to guide his footsteps through the lonely solitudes; he knew not

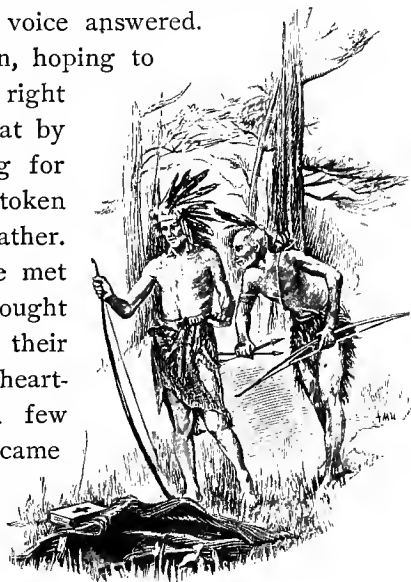


whether the river was on his right hand or on his left; he was hopelessly lost.

When Jean Guérin reached the foot of the rapids he waited long for his master. He called, but only the echo of his own voice answered. Five times he fired his gun, hoping to direct the wanderer to the right spot. He built a fire and sat by its blaze all night, listening for any sound that might betoken the nearness of the good father.

On the following day he met a band of Hurons and besought them to go in search of their lost friend; but in their heartlessness they refused. A few weeks later a Sac Indian came to the Huron settlement with the camp kettle which Father Ménard was in the habit of carrying with him.

He had picked it up in a thicket of underwoods where were footprints pointing westward. Some Sioux Indians, while hunting in another place, found the priest's breviary and cloak lying on the ground, probably where their owner had stopped to rest. But Father Ménard was never seen again; and no one knows how he perished, whether from hunger or exhaustion, or whether he was slain by wild beasts or savage men.



"The priest's breviary and cloak"

II. ALLOUEZ

When the story of Father Ménard was told to his brethren in Canada, they resolved that his death should spur them to more heroic efforts for the salvation of unworthy souls. But it was four years before any active steps were taken to carry on the work which he had attempted to begin. At length Claude Allouez, a man in the prime of life, brave, zealous, and born to leadership, was chosen to be missionary to the fugitive Hurons. It was past midsummer when he started to the field of his labors. Four hundred savages, who had come
1665 down from the upper lakes to barter their furs, were returning to their homes; and the sturdy missionary was pleased to make the greater part of the journey with them.

How wonderful had been the change in the life and customs of the Indian nations since the coming of the French traders into the valley of the St. Lawrence! Formerly each tribe had dwelt in its own place in the forest, its men seldom venturing far from their own clearings and villages. They were contented with their little belongings, and their knowledge of the world was limited by the horizon. But when the traders came, and the red men learned that for a few furs they could purchase wonderful articles, both useful and beautiful, a new epoch began for them, and their ways of life were altered. Their hunters and trappers traversed the forests far and near in quest of fur-bearing animals. They became acquainted with distant tribes, and were easily persuaded

to change their places of habitation ; and they undertook long and perilous journeys to dispose of the peltries which they had gathered, and to see the ways of the white men. Thus it had happened that the savages of the upper lakes, who had so lately been unknown, had felt the charm of the traders' presence and had come out of their solitudes to have intercourse with the superior race—an intercourse which in the end would be their destruction.

It was early in September when Allouez reached the Sault Sainte Marie, and there he parted from his savage escort. The Ojibways, or Chippewas, welcomed him to their village at the foot of the rapids, and 1665 with them he would gladly have tarried ; but duty required him to go forward to a more distant field. With only a few companions he embarked on the upper lake, a portion of whose shores had been made known through the explorations of Grosseilliers and Radisson. The visit of Joliet and Peré to these waters, of which we have already learned, did not take place until three years later.

Allouez was delighted with his voyage upon the upper lake. Of all the fresh-water seas he had beheld, this seemed to him the grandest ; and in his enthusiasm he christened it Lake Tracy, in honor of the Marquis de Tracy, the new lieutenant general of Canada, from whom the Jesuits expected great things.

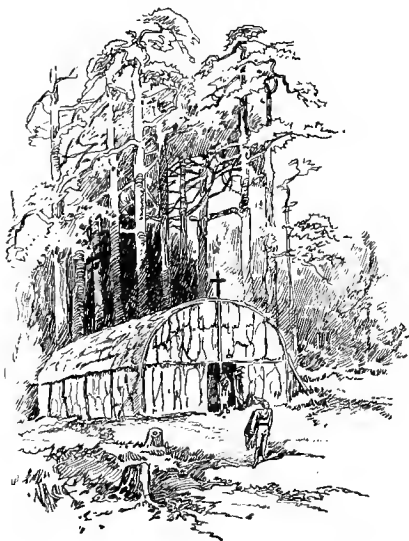
Near the end of the month the intrepid missionary reached La Pointe, at or near the place where Radisson and Grosseilliers had built their hut. In a straggling village close by, where Indians of several tribes had come together, he founded the mission of St. Esprit, and there he built a

bark chapel as a place of worship — the first church, if we may call it such, within the limits of the Old Northwest. Not far from the head of the bay were other villages, where lived some eight hundred savages belonging to various Algonquin tribes, the greater number being vagrant

Ottawas. Over all these, as well as over the Hurons, farther inland, Father Allouez hoped to extend some sort of pastoral care.

To the mission of St. Esprit the savages soon began to resort in large numbers; and the zealous Allouez used many devices to secure their confidence and friendship. He told them that the French would surely crush and utterly subdue their old enemies, the Iroquois; and he assured them that the time would soon come when they could

return to their old homes by the head waters of the Ottawa and on the shores of the Mer Douce. With their young men he explored much of the country along the lake shore; and from them he heard of the mysterious copper mines, and of the great water called "Missipi" which flowed through mysterious regions far to the south. On one of his excursions he fell in with



"He built a bark chapel"

a roving band of Sioux Indians—the terror of the West—and from them he learned that their home was on the treeless prairies farther west, while beyond was an unknown land bordered by the great salt sea. But, with all his zeal and enterprise and patience, the missionary of St. Esprit made but few converts, and the savages, especially the Ottawas, remained as savage and degraded as before.

III. MARQUETTE

About a year before the coming of La Salle to Canada there arrived on the St. Lawrence a young Jesuit priest, whose name was Jacques Marquette. He was of 1666 a gentle disposition, refined, well educated, and intent only upon doing good. No sooner had he set foot upon Canadian soil than he began to prepare himself for the duties of a missionary among the savages of the Northwest. After spending a year and a half at Three Rivers, studying the languages of the principal Indian tribes, he set out with a party of returning natives to the distant shores of Lake Superior. He arrived at the Sault Sainte Marie without mishap, and took up his abode with the Chippewas, who rejoiced that he had come to establish a mission among them. There he was soon joined by another missionary, Claude Dablon, and the two, with the help of their first converts, built a little church on the bank of the river, and surrounded it with cedar pickets. It was near the spot where the gentle Raymbault had been laid by his sorrowing companion, Father Jogues.

The rude building had scarcely been completed when Marquette was commanded to go still farther west and

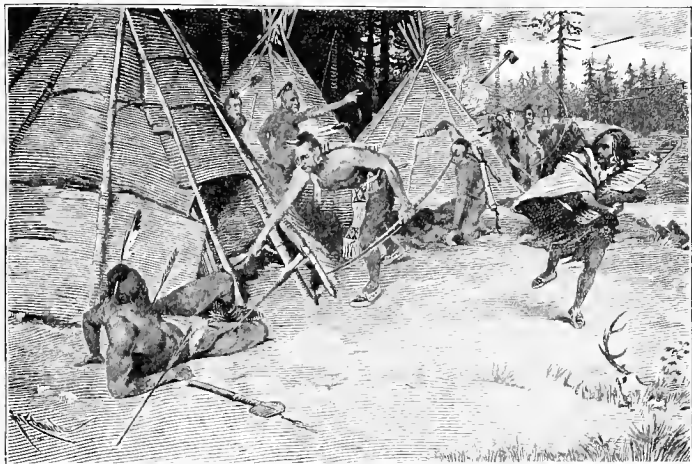
assume charge of the mission of St. Esprit at La Pointe. He obeyed without asking why; but when he presented himself to take the place of the veteran Allouez he learned the reasons for the change. Among the Indians on the shore of Green Bay there had lately come from Canada a party of reckless young Frenchmen—lawless woods rangers, or *courcurs de bois*—who were outdoing the savages in deeds of violence and crime. The Pottawatomies and other tribes near the River Fox, degraded though they were, were horrified by the doings of these desperadoes. To Father Allouez in the distant mission of St. Esprit they sent a messenger, praying him to come and tame the wild spirits of the men of his own nation. "We are daily in fear for our lives. We are terrified by their wickedness. Come, and teach them something about that religion of gentleness of which we have heard."

Could the veteran missionary refuse to listen to this appeal? To the superior of his Order in Canada he wrote an account of the whole matter; and the result was that he received permission to go among the tribes of Green Bay, to preach conversion to the red savages and to reprove and restrain the white. But who should carry on the work which he had begun at La Pointe? Surely no man was better fitted for that duty than young Father Marquette.

And this was why Marquette had been removed from his appointed field at the Sault Sainte Marie. Allouez
1669 proceeded at once to the Green Bay region; and on the Fox River, not far from its mouth, he set up among the Pottawatomies and other tribes the mission of St. Francis Xavier.

IV. ST. ESPRIT

The mission of St. Esprit had never prospered. The Indians for whom it had been established were hardened wretches whose hearts could not be touched. The commanding presence of Allouez and the gentle ministrations



"Vengeance was sure and swift"

of Marquette failed alike to win them to virtue and piety. There were, it is true, a few converts among the women and children; but the men, while tolerating the missionaries, took pleasure in making their lives as uncomfortable as possible.

Soon after Marquette's arrival at the mission there came to La Pointe a small party of red men, who brought furs to barter to the French traders. Marquette was struck by the gentle manners of these men, so different from

the rude insolence of the Ottawas, and he asked them the name of their tribe. They told him that they were Illinois, and that their home was far southward in a land of prairies beyond a mighty river. They listened with great patience to Marquette while he tried to unfold some of the truths of religion, and this so filled his heart with pleasure that he vowed to visit their country and establish a mission among them.

Wandering bands of Sioux—daring and haughty savages—also came to La Pointe and repeated the story of the “Missipi,” of treeless plains beyond it, of a mysterious sea of fetid water. And from still other Indians Marquette heard strange tales of a distant country where the corn ripened twice a year, and the people wore glass beads, and winged canoes went swiftly up and down the river. Surely he was on the threshold of a strange new world which no European had yet entered or explored.

But for the heathen around La Pointe dreadful days were near at hand. To the unhappy Hurons, hiding from the vengeance of the Iroquois, there seemed to be no end of misfortune. Scarcely had they begun to feel settled in their new home when another terrible disaster befell them. Some friendly Sioux who were visiting in the villages were set upon and treacherously murdered by a party of hot-headed young Ottawas. Vengeance was sure and swift. A war party of Sioux—Iroquois of the West, as Marquette called them—swooped down upon their settlements, and Hurons and Ottawas, like frightened sheep, fled into the forest. The houses and wigwams were burned, the crops were destroyed, the whole country was laid waste.

The trading post at La Pointe was burned, the mission of St. Esprit was abandoned, and Father Marquette, fleeing with his flock, finally made his way back to the Sault Sainte Marie, there to await whatsoever might occur.

V. DOLLIER AND GALINÉE

One afternoon in May the two missionaries, Marquette and Dablon, were told that some white strangers were



“ In the foremost sat two priests ”

approaching the sault from below. Going down to the river's side they saw four canoes coming slowly up the stream. These were manned by Huron Indians, and in the foremost sat two priests wearing garbs that were plainly not those of Jesuit missionaries.

The two newcomers proved to be our old acquaintances of the Sulpician brotherhood, Dollier and Galinée. We have already seen how, in the preceding summer, they had set out with La Salle upon a tour of exploration, and how in the early autumn they had met Joliet in an Indian village at the head of Lake Ontario. After leaving the village they had launched their canoes on Grand River and descended that stream to Lake Erie. In a sheltered grove, secure from the northwest winds, they built some bark huts and in one of them erected an altar; and there, with their servants and followers, they spent the winter. With the opening of spring they began to make ready to continue their voyage. Not far from the water's edge they raised a cross, and, with much ceremony and in the name of the French king, took possession of the lake and all the land surrounding it. Then, embarking in their canoes, they paddled westward, keeping close to the northern shore and looking in vain for some sign of human life. After losing one of their canoes, which was blown away from its moorings while they were asleep on land, they safely entered the broad river Detroit. A favoring wind helped them on their way northward, and, passing through the St. Clair, they emerged upon the bosom of the Mer Douce of the Hurons. Following the windings of the shore of that great water they continued on their course. They crossed the head of the lake, threaded their way through a labyrinth of green islands, paddled slowly up the River Sainte Marie, and finally, as we have seen, arrived at the already famous sault. They were the first white men to journey from the St. Lawrence to the region of

VI. ST. IGNACE

In the meanwhile, what was the fate of the remnant of the Hurons in the far Northwest? With the vengeful Iroquois on the one hand and the ferocious Sioux on the other, these people were in desperate straits. But they remembered that the French had befriended their nation on more than one occasion, and they believed that in the neighborhood of the trading posts they might find protection from their foes; and so in their distress they resolved to go back to their old hunting grounds near the shores of the Mer Douce. When, however, they reached that point of land which extends southward into the Strait of Mackinac, their dread of the Iroquois became so strong that they halted there and were unwilling to go farther. The



water was full of fish, life would be easy, their enemies would scarcely dare to seek them in that secluded spot. It was a good place in which to make new homes for themselves.

Some of their Ottawa neighbors who had suffered with them settled also on the same peninsula; but the greater number continued their flight to the Manitoulin Islands at the head of Lake Huron.

When news of the whereabouts of the fugitives was carried to Father Marquette at the Sault Sainte Marie, he at once hastened to join them and to offer them such

help and encouragement as was in his power to give. On the shore of the strait, within sight of the rocky islet of Mackinac, he set up the mission of St. Ignace, and began to gather around him the wretched remnants of the scattered tribes. The Indians called the entire region Michilimackinac (Mackinac), and by that name the post was known, both while it was on the north side of the strait and also after its removal, many years later, to the opposite shore.

VII. SAINT-LUSSON

While Marquette was busy building his chapel at Mackinac, and doing deeds of kindness to a suffering people, preparations were being made for a strange and imposing ceremonial at the Sault Sainte Marie. 1671 French officers from Quebec were expected, and there were to be solemn feasts with the Indians, and mock battles, and a grand pageant such as had never been seen on the American continent. Messengers had been sent out to invite all the friendly tribes from Lake Nipissing to La Pointe, and from Green Bay to the frozen rivers of the North, to come and take part in the festivities. The ceremonial had been planned by Nicholas Perrot, a young ranger of the woods, who even at that early period dimly recognized the vast importance of the lake region and saw in the wilderness Northwest the seat of future empire. It had been sanctioned by Talon, the intendant of Canada; and he had selected the Sieur Saint-Lusson, a soldier of France, to represent the French king before the savage nations that were invited to attend.

On the fourteenth of June the hosts had arrived. The Sieur Saint-Lusson, clad in the brilliant regalia of his office, ascended the slope that rises from the south side of the sault. With him as aids and lieutenants were Louis Joliet, already famous for his explorations, and Nicholas Perrot, the ranger and trader, besides several Frenchmen from Montreal and four Jesuit fathers dressed in their priestly robes.



" Father Dablon went forward "

Following these was one of the strangest throngs ever seen in our own or any other country. There were fur traders and trappers, Canadian voyageurs, and soldiers of France; and flanking the hill on both sides were the warriors and chiefs of fourteen savage nations, gay in their holiday trappings, hideous with paint and feathers, loathsome in person and in manners—all mingling together in strange and unaccustomed friendship.

A huge wooden cross had already been carried to the top of the hill, and around it the motley procession moved. Then, while all stood still and made some show of reverence, Father Dablon went forward and blessed it; and when the emblem had been reared and firmly planted, the Frenchmen, with uncovered heads, sang an ancient hymn:—

“The banners of heaven’s King advance;
The mystery of the cross shines forth.”

By the side of the cross a cedar post was raised, and upon it was nailed a metal plate inscribed with the royal arms of France. This done, the *Sieur Saint-Lusson* stepped forward, and, raising a sod of earth with one hand and flourishing his sword with the other, made proclamation in the name of Louis XIV., the king of France. He declared that he took possession “of this place, *Sainte Marie du Sault*, as also of Lakes Huron and Superior, the Island of Manitoulin, and all countries, rivers, lakes, and streams contiguous and adjacent thereunto: both those which have been discovered and those which may be discovered hereafter, in all their length and breadth, bounded on the one side by the seas of the North and West, and on the other by the South Sea.”

At the close of this speech the Frenchmen shouted “*Vive le roi!*” and the Indians, not to be outdone, yelled and hooted like thousands of demons. Then Father Allouez made a speech to the dusky warriors, telling them of the grandeur and might of his master Louis XIV., who was “more terrible than thunder, and moved in the midst of his warriors covered with the blood of his ene-

mies. . . . But what shall I say of his riches?" he continued. "You think yourselves rich when you have ten or twelve sacks of corn, a few hatchets, beads, kettles, and other things of that sort. He has cities of his own, more than there are of men in all this country for five hundred leagues around. In each city there are storehouses where there are hatchets enough to cut down all your forests, kettles enough to cook all your moose, and beads enough to fill all your lodges. His house is longer than from here to the top of the sault [that is, more than half a league]; it is higher than your tallest trees; and it holds more families than the largest of your towns."

It was a wonderful speech, adapted to the understanding of the savages and appealing to their wildest fancies. When it was ended there was another tremendous chorus of yells; and then white men and red men returned to the village to enjoy the feast that had been prepared and to witness the sham battles with which the great day was closed. Thus, by an imposing ceremonial in the heart of the wilderness, France took formal possession of the Great Lakes, the unknown rivers, and all the rich lands of the Northwest.

THE HIDDEN RIVER

I. THE EXPLORER AND THE MISSIONARY

LOUIS JOLIET had other business at the Sault Sainte Marie besides attending the grand ceremonial to which Saint-Lusson had invited him. The discovery of the hidden river of the West was the one object of his thoughts, and all his energies were now being directed to its accomplishment. Of the Indians who had come to the sault from the West and the South, he asked many questions about this mysterious stream; but they could tell him nothing of value, and their vague, disconnected stories only whetted his desire to see and know for himself. He returned to Quebec much discouraged, but not yet ready to give up hope.



Count Frontenac

In the following spring a new governor took charge of affairs in Canada. His name was Louis de Buade, but he is known in history by his title, Count Frontenac. Next to Champlain he stands highest among the makers of New France. He was already growing old, was headstrong and extravagant, but just the kind of man to deal wisely with the Indians and extend the French influence in the Northwest. He

1672

heartily hated the Jesuits, and it was not long before he had a bitter quarrel with the Sulpicians. It was plain to everybody that a new order of things was about to begin in Canada.

Count Frontenac had already heard of Louis Joliet. The intendant, Talon, had spoken to him of that young man's rare ability as an explorer and had told him of his discoveries on the lakes. He was asked to speak for himself, and, before the summer was ended, he was commissioned to make an expedition into the far West, and, if possible, discover the mysterious river of which so many rumors were afloat.

Joliet did not waste any time in making preparations. Early in December he arrived at Mackinac, where Father

1672 Marquette was busy attending to the needs of the little band of Hurons that had gathered around his mission of St. Ignace. The explorer had heard of the gentle priest as a man who had made a careful study of all that was known about the country west of the lakes, and he believed that from him he would be able to learn many valuable facts.

Marquette was delighted to receive his visitor, for he was already deeply interested in the project Joliet had undertaken. We can easily imagine the two men sitting in the missionary's little cabin and talking about the subject that was dearest to the thoughts of both.

"When I was at La Pointe four years ago," we may suppose Marquette to say, "I heard a great deal about the undiscovered river of the West. The Indians who live near it call it the Missipi; and they say that for more

than three hundred leagues from its mouth it is wider than the St. Lawrence at Quebec. For a long distance it flows through a treeless prairie land; but as it nears the sea its banks are again bordered by forests. Along the river, from the country of the Sioux to its mouth, there are many tribes of savages who speak different languages and have different customs, and are always waging war upon one another. These are some of the things that were told me by a band of red men who call themselves Illinois. I would that I could go to them in their own home in the Missipi country, as indeed I promised them; for they are truly a gentle-hearted people, eager to learn, and not so utterly depraved as some of the more northern tribes."

This and much more did the missionary impart to the explorer; and it was almost unnecessary for Joliet to say that he had brought from the governor, and from the Superior of the Jesuits at Quebec, definite instructions to Marquette to be his companion in a tour of discovery beyond the Great Lakes. The good priest needed no other commission. It was agreed that, early in the following spring, as soon as the lakes should be free from ice, they would set forth together and not return until the mystery of the hidden river was solved.

The winter was spent at Mackinac, putting everything in readiness for the voyage. From Indians who had been at Green Bay, Marquette made careful inquiries about the country and the best westerly routes; and from such information as was given he drew a rough map—mostly mere guesswork—of their intended course.

II. THE FOX AND THE WISCONSIN

On the 17th of May the explorers set out in two birch-bark canoes, with five men as assistants and guides. "I placed our expedition," wrote Marquette, "under
1673 the protection of the Holy Virgin Immaculate, promising that if she granted us the favor of discovering the great river, I would give it the name of Conception."

They followed the same route along the northern shore of Lake Michigan that Jean Nicolet had traversed thirty-



"They beheld an Indian town"

nine years before. They entered Green Bay, and stopped a day in the village of the Menominees, or Wild Rice Indians. These friendly people were astonished when they heard that the white men were on their way to the great river.

"The river," said they, "abounds in monsters which devour both men and canoes; and the nations that dwell along its banks never spare the strangers that venture among them."

"I will gladly lay down my life for the salvation of souls," answered Marquette; and, uttering a simple prayer which he desired them to repeat, he left them wondering.

The next stop was made at the head of the bay, and near the De Pere rapids they found Father Allouez at his mission of St. Francis Xavier. There they tarried a day or two, and then, still following in the track of Jean Nicolet, they pushed onward up the river of the Foxes.

They skirted the shores of Lake Winnebago, and followed the winding stream beyond, now paddling through thickets of wild rice, and now gliding between wooded shores where they caught glimpses of rolling meadows in the distance. At length they came into the country of the Mascoutins, the Miamis, the Kickapoos, and the Foxes. They beheld an Indian town, built on a hill in the midst of a prairie; and as they drew near, Marquette was rejoiced to see a cross planted in the center of a cluster of wigwams. The intrepid fathers, Allouez and Dablon, had visited this spot three years before; they had set up this emblem of the Christian faith; they had explained its mystic power, and taught the natives to hold it in reverence. The simple-hearted savages had decorated it with their most precious possessions, bows and arrows and savage ornaments, to appease the Great Manitou of the white man and give him thanks for the game and the plenteous harvests that he had sent them.

The explorers landed, and, going up to the village, called a council of the chiefs. They came, eager to see their visitors and learn their wishes. Among them were

stately warriors of the Miami nation with locks of hair falling over their ears, Mascoutins of smaller stature and ruder mien, and Kickapoos with ungainly forms and unpleasing features. Joliet explained to these savages the object of their journey, saying that he himself had been sent out by the French king to discover new countries, and that Marquette had come as the messenger of the Great Manitou to enlighten the hearts of the red men. Then, after telling them that two guides were needed to show the way, he gave to each man a present, and sat down. The chiefs, who had listened with great interest, not only consented to give them the guides, but presented them with a mat to be used as a bed during the voyage.

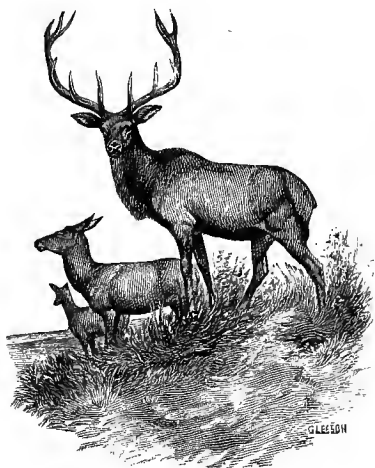
On the 10th of June the explorers again embarked in their canoes. Guided by two Miamis, they followed
1673 the narrowing stream through swamps and wet meadow lands until at length they reached the place of portage and must needs carry their canoes and goods across the land. Their path led them through a level prairie, dotted with ponds where wild rice was growing, and, after a winding course of two miles, ended on the banks of a westward-flowing stream. Here, without more delay than was necessary, the travelers again launched their canoes. "The guides returned," says Marquette, "leaving us alone, in this unknown land, in the hands of Providence."

The stream upon which they embarked was broad, with many sandy shallows. It would carry them to the great hidden river; but whither then would they be borne? Did the waters of the "Missipi" flow westwardly

to the Gulf of California, or mayhap directly into the South Sea? Or did they pursue a more eastward course and finally empty into the Mexican Gulf or into the Sea of Virginia? These were questions which the explorers hoped to solve, but which they now asked themselves with many doubting surmises.

Following the winding current of the Wisconsin, they floated onward, now passing between grassy banks shadowed with thick foliage, and now emerging into a region of rich bottom lands bordered by tree-covered bluffs. Tall oaks and walnuts and trees of unknown species grew along the shore; and the banks were lined with thickets of underbrush and trailing vines. In the forest they saw little game; but, now and then, in the prairie-like openings, they caught glimpses of deer and other animals grazing among the rank herbage.

This river, upon which they floated for about forty leagues, was called by Marquette the Mesconsing, for so he understood the Indians to pronounce it; and the French traders who afterward came into that region gave it the similar name, Ouisconsin—or, as it is spelled in English, Wisconsin.



“They caught glimpses
of deer”

III. THE VOYAGE

It was the 17th of June when, as Marquette relates, the explorers "entered happily the Great River with a joy that I cannot express." Joliet, in gratitude to
1673 Count Frontenac for sending him upon this expedition, named the river La Buade; but Marquette, remembering the vow he had made, called it the Conception. Neither of these names, however, was able to supplant the Indian designation, Mississippi, "the Father of Waters."

No one can understand the feelings of the explorers as their canoes shot out upon the deep current of the mysterious stream which had so long been the goal of all their hopes. Throughout the day they kept in midstream and paddled leisurely along with the current. Toward evening they landed in some secluded nook to cook and eat their supper; then, as darkness began to fall, lest they should be surprised by some lurking foe, they pushed out from the shore and anchored, lying in their canoes until morning.

Thus, for more than a week, they continued their voyage, their way lying between the banks that border the present states of Illinois and Iowa. On either hand they saw broad prairies interspersed with groves and watered by many streams. Now they caught sight of flocks of deer browsing on the uplands; now they heard the call of wild turkeys among the trees by the shore; and now they beheld large droves of buffaloes — "Illinois oxen clothed in wool" — moving slowly over the grass-covered

plains. From time to time they saw monstrous fish in the water, and one of these struck so violently against the canoe that the voyagers were in danger of being thrown into the water. And once they saw a monstrous panther, "with



“ ‘ Illinois oxen clothed in wool ’ ”

the head of a tiger, and a pointed snout like a wild-cat's," swimming in the stream.

At length, on the western bank, they discovered the footprints of men and a well-trodden path leading up to a beautiful prairie. They landed, and Joliet and Marquette fearlessly followed this path, anxious to know what sort of people lived in that region. It led them a distance of six miles, over hills and through meadows and woods, until they came within sight of a village on the bank

of a river. With hesitating steps and prayers for God's protection they went forward until they were near enough to hear the voices of the Indians in their wigwams. Then, halting, they uttered a loud shout.

The Indians heard them. Four old men came out to meet them, carrying the calumet, or peace pipe, decorated with many kinds of feathers. They walked very slowly and with great deliberation; and when at last they drew quite near they stopped and gazed at the strangers, not saying a word.

Marquette, who understood many Indian languages, asked them who they were. "We are Illinois," they said, meaning thereby, "We are men;" and they offered the peace pipe. Indians and Frenchmen then walked together to the village.

The chief of the tribe stood naked in the doorway of his cabin to welcome the strangers.

"Oh, strangers," he said, "how beautiful is the sun when you come to visit us! Our whole village welcomes you, and you shall enter all our wigwams in peace."

Having said this he led them inside, where were all the warriors and great men of the village, eager to greet them. "Well done, brothers," they said; "it is kind of you to visit us!" And then all smoked the calumet together.

Soon there came other savages to invite the strangers to visit the great chief of all the Illinois, whose village was on a hill not far away. They went, and were followed by a crowd of men and boys who danced by the roadside and tumbled among the grass in their excessive joy at beholding the faces of white men. Upon arriving at the second

village they were received by the great chief with hearty expressions of joy. "I thank thee, Blackgown," said he to Marquette, "for taking so much pains to come and visit us. Never has our river been so calm, nor so free from rocks, which your canoes have removed as they passed; never has our tobacco had so fine a flavor, nor our corn appeared so beautiful as we behold it to-day."



The calumet

And then he gave presents to the white men: a little slave and a calumet adorned with colored feathers.

After this a great feast was served, consisting of hominy, fish, a broiled dog, and fat buffalo meat. The two Frenchmen tasted sparingly of the first two, and refused to touch the third; but the fourth was more appetizing, and of it they ate heartily, much to the satisfaction of their hosts. At the close of the feast they were led through the village, so that all the natives might see them without being troublesome; and every one was anxious to give them some sort of present, a belt, or a garter, or some simple ornament made of feathers or of the hair of the buffalo dyed red, yellow, and gray. When night came on they were led back to the chief's wigwam, and buffalo robes were spread upon the ground for them to rest upon.

The next day, escorted by nearly six hundred of the natives, the Frenchmen returned to their canoes and again embarked upon the Mississippi. Paddling along with the current, they passed on their left the mouth of

the river afterward known as the Illinois, and looked up with wonder at castle-like rocks along the shore, on which the Indians had painted the figures of horrible monsters. A few days later they heard the roar of the Missouri, called by the Indians the Pekitanoui, or muddy river; and soon saw its swift current rushing like a conqueror into the quieter Mississippi, and seeming to hurry it along in its journey toward the sea. Whence came this mighty river if not from a region bordering upon the western ocean? "I have hardly any doubt," said Marquette, "that through this river lies the way to the Vermilion or California Sea, and I do not despair of one day making the discovery."

Continuing their course, the explorers passed the site of the present city of St. Louis; but in the dense forest which then covered the spot there was nothing to foreshadow the bustling marts and the noisy streets of the future metropolis of the West. A few days later they glided past the mouth of the Ohio, or La Belle Rivière, which Marquette called the Ouabouskigon. Its low and swampy shores were covered with dense canebrakes, and Marquette saw here nothing to indicate the greatness of the stream or to hint of the beauty of its upper reaches. He was told that it came from a country inhabited by the Chaouanons [Shawnees], a populous but peace-loving nation much harassed by roving bands of Iroquois.

And now, with the hot July sun above them, the explorers floated onward, past densely wooded shores and broad marshes, until they approached on the left a long range of lofty bluffs overlooking the riverside. Here they saw

on the shore some Indians armed with guns; and Joliet rightly guessed that they had gotten these in barter with the English in Virginia. Marquette offered the feathered calumet, and the savages invited them to go on shore. They visited the cabins of the red men, who made them a feast of buffalo meat and bear's oil and ripe plums, in token of their good-will and friendship.

These savages were the Chickasaws, whose country extended many miles along the eastern shore of the river. They told Marquette that it was not more than ten days' journey to the sea; and that there were white men living some distance to the eastward, who sold



"They saw Indians armed with guns"

them guns and knives and beads and glass bottles. Much encouraged by what these people told them, the Frenchmen again embarked and paddled onward with renewed ardor. They soon arrived at the mouth of a large river which Joliet called the Bazire, after a friend in Montreal, but which we now know as the Arkansas. On the opposite bank of the Mississippi stood a village of the tribe called Akamsea. Here the voyagers landed, and were led with great ceremony into the presence of the chief. Rush

mats were spread upon the ground in front of his wigwam, and upon these Marquette and Joliet were invited to sit. The warriors sat around them in a semicircle, then came the elders of the tribe, and behind all stood a wondering crowd of women and children. The men were naked, but had strings of beads in their ears and noses; the women wore the skins of wild animals about their persons, and tied their hair in knotted clumps behind each ear.

The chief made a long speech of welcome to the strangers; food was brought in on earthen platters, and all were regaled on hominy, mush, and roasted dog. All day the feast continued; and at night the chief attended his visitors to their canoes and danced the calumet dance to assure them of his good will.

It chanced most happily that among the villagers there was a young man who had been among the Indians of the North, and could speak the language of the Illinois. He told Marquette that it would be dangerous to go farther; for the tribes along the river had firearms and were of a cruel and warlike nature, and would most surely try to do them harm. The explorers considered what they should do. They were now certain that the river flowed, not to the Pacific Ocean, nor yet into the Atlantic by the Virginian coast, but into the Gulf of Mexico. They had, therefore, solved the great problem of the river's course. By going farther there was much to be risked and little to be gained; and if they should perish at the hands of the savages or be taken prisoners by the Spanish, all the fruits of their discovery would be lost. They therefore

resolved to return without unnecessary delay. They had reached a point which by Marquette's observations was in latitude $33^{\circ} 40'$ north of the equator.

IV. THE RETURN

On the 17th of July, just one month after entering the river at the mouth of the Wisconsin, the explorers began their long and weary voyage homeward. Day after day they toiled, paddling against the adverse current; night after night they encamped on the oozy banks, amid the unhealthful vapors of the bayous and marshes. At last they reached the mouth of the Illinois River, and were told by the Indians dwelling there that by ascending that stream they would find a safe and easy passage to the Great Lakes. They therefore turned their canoes into it and were delighted with the change. The current was not strong, and for sixty-five leagues there were neither rapids nor waterfalls. The fertility of the country, with its woods and prairies, was a source of constant wonder.

They stopped for three days in a village of the Illinois, where Marquette busied himself in consoling the sick and expounding the mysteries of religion. "Had this voyage caused but the salvation of a single soul," he said, "I should deem all my fatigue well repaid." In this village, which was called Kaskaskia, there were more than seventy lodges, with several fires and families in each; and the people were so impressed by the kindness of the missionary that they besought him to come back and live with them.

This he promised to do; and when he renewed his journey one of the chiefs with his young men went a long distance with him as guide and protector.

The party now pushed onward up the ever narrowing stream, and at its forks turned to the left into what is now known as the Des Plaines River. With the level prairies stretching like a green sea on either hand, they continued toward the northeast. They passed near the broad knoll where in later times was to stand a city named in honor of Joliet. They carried their canoes across the short portage—less than half a league—to the river Chicago, and, launching them upon that narrow and sluggish stream, paddled tirelessly onward through oozy solitudes never before seen by the eyes of civilized man. Soon, to their joy, they beheld the great lake of the Illinois [Michigan], its waters sparkling and dancing in the light of the noon-day sun. They were at the spot where now are the busy wharves and towering warehouses of the second city of the American continent; but there was nothing to be seen in the desolate prairie land about them to indicate that here, in course of time, the hum of busy traffic would be heard, and millions of human beings would find their homes.

Once on the waters of the lake, it was easy to find the way to Green Bay—"the Bay of the Fetid," as Marquette calls it—and there the two explorers separated. Joliet went on by way of Mackinac to the Sault Sainte Marie; but Marquette, too feeble to proceed farther, remained through the winter with Father Allouez at his mission near the head of the bay.

V. THE MISSION OF THE ILLINOIS

Early in the following year, Joliet, with some Huron canoemen, set out for Quebec. On the way he stopped for a few days at a new French post called Fort Frontenac, near the eastern end of Lake Ontario. ¹⁶⁷³ Then, canoeing down the St. Lawrence, he was almost at the end of his long journey when a most serious accident occurred. At the foot of Lachine rapids his canoe was overturned, two of his men were drowned, and all his charts and papers were lost. It was midsummer when he finally arrived at Quebec and related to Count Frontenac the history of his explorations.

In the meanwhile Marquette, in the lonely mission at Green Bay, had written the journal of his voyage down the Mississippi, and had sent it to the superior of his Order; but his feeble health forbade his undertaking any active labor. The summer dragged on, and October with its charming skies and bracing air gave new life to the invalid. He remembered the promise given to the Illinois, that he would return to them, and he resolved to set out for their country.

On the 25th of the month he started, having with him two hunters, Pierre and Jacques, and several Indians. They embarked on Lake Michigan in ten canoes, and made their way slowly along the western shore, hindered much by storms, and made wretched by chilling winds and driving rains. When, at last, they turned into the mouth of the Chicago River, Marquette was too feeble to go farther. His Indian escort left him; but Jacques and Pierre staid by him and built on the shore a rude hut of sticks and

grass—the first human habitation on the site of the present city of Chicago.

Here Marquette spent a long winter in meditation and prayer. There was no lack of food, for the prairie and marshes were full of wild game; and the two hunters did all they could to make everything comfortable. Some Indians in the neighborhood came to see the sick man and asked him for powder. "Powder I have not," answered he. "I have come to spread peace through the land, and I do not wish to see you at war with the Miamis."

At the approach of spring Marquette's strength began to revive; and, as soon as the ice was melted in the river, the party started again on their journey. They followed the windings of the narrow Chicago, crossed the portage where now flows the great Drainage Canal, and, launching their canoes on the then overflowing Des Plaines, soon arrived at the village of the Illinois. The savages welcomed the missionary "as an angel from heaven," for, among all the tribes of the West, these seem to have been the gentlest and most open-hearted.

Marquette went from lodge to lodge explaining to old and young the mysteries of the Christian faith. On the open prairie, not far from where the village of Utica now stands, two thousand savages, not counting women and children, met together to hear him preach, and many of them professed to be converted. But the missionary's strength was unequal to his zeal. He knew that his life was fast drawing to a close, and he wished, if possible, to die among his own people. The Indians were unwilling to part with him; but he promised that he or some other

of the fathers would return to them, and they bade him a tearful farewell.

Thinking to find a shorter route to Mackinac, Marquette and the faithful Jacques and Pierre crossed the head of Lake Michigan to some point near the St. Joseph River, and then followed its eastern shore toward the north. After some days they came to the mouth of a small river, and seeing a grassy knoll near one of the banks, Marquette told his companions that there was the place of his last repose. They carried him ashore, kindled a fire, and built over him a rude shelter of green branches and strips of bark. When they had made him as comfortable as they could, they left him at his devotions and went a little way into the woods. When they returned shortly afterward, they found him dead. After shedding many tears over his body, they buried it under the trees, and then in great sadness continued their voyage to Mackinac.

A year afterward some Ottawas from the mission of St. Ignace visited the spot where Marquette had died. They remembered the many kind deeds which the missionary had wrought among their own people, and how he had given his life for the sake of the red men. With greatest



Statue of Marquette
at Washington

care they opened his grave, they took up his bones, and laid them in a case of birch bark which they had prepared. Then, at the head of a long procession of canoes, they carried the remains to Mackinac. There, beneath the little chapel of the mission of St. Ignace, they buried all that was left to them of the gentle, the accomplished, the self-sacrificing Marquette.

Two hundred years later, beneath the spot where the chapel is supposed to have stood, a search was made, and a few fragments of a skeleton were found. Whether these were really the remains of the sainted missionary, no one can ever know; but they were gathered together with care, and with much reverence were reburied.

FROM CATARAQUI TO CRÈVECŒUR

I. CATARAQUI

YOU remémber how Louis Joliet in 1669 discovered the water way between Lake Huron and Lake Erie, and made known a new route to the distant West by way of the upper St. Lawrence and the lower lakes. Count Frontenac, the new governor of Canada, was quick to see the advantages of this route and the wonderful possibilities which it offered for trade and exploration. As a first step toward opening it and providing for its security, he decided to build a fort at some convenient spot on the shore of Lake Ontario. Such a fort, well manned, would help to overawe the Iroquois, who, although then at peace with the French, patrolled the country south of the lakes and made perilous the portage around Niagara. It would serve also as a frontier trading post to which the red men of the Northwest would bring their furs, instead of carrying them to the English who had lately established themselves in New York.

At the very time that Joliet and Marquette were making their memorable voyage down the Mississippi, Frontenac, with a flotilla of two flatboats and a hundred and twenty canoes, was slowly ascending the St. Lawrence. Early in July the flotilla sailed through the labyrinth of the Thousand Islands; and on the 12th

1673

of the month the governor and his followers and assistants landed with great pomp and ceremony at the place which had been selected for the fort. It was near the outlet of the lake, on the site of the present city of Kingston. The spot was known to the Indians as Cataraqui.

Many workmen were soon busy, felling trees, hewing logs, and digging intrenchments, and within a surprisingly short time the fort was ready for occupancy.

Encamped by the edge of the forest were numbers of Indians, chiefs and warriors of the five nations of the Iroquois, who had gathered there to see what "Onontio," as they called the governor of Canada, was about to do. With these Count Frontenac called a council. After the pipes had been smoked in silence and the stern-faced chiefs had pondered long on the business that had brought them together, the governor arose and spoke to them. "Children," he said, "I am glad to see you here, where I have lighted a fire for you to smoke by, and for me to talk to you." And then while reminding them of his power to punish them for any misconduct, he told of the great good will which he felt toward them, and said that he would build at Cataraqui a storehouse where they could barter their furs for every kind of goods they needed. He warned them to beware of acting rashly, and advised them to listen only to the counsels of "men of character like the Sieur de la Salle."

This speech had a great weight with the dusky braves who listened to it, and through them it had an effect upon the whole Iroquois nation. They saw that the new governor was a man of determined character and large

resources, and that it would be dangerous to offend him. While they feared his enmity, they respected his courage; and they felt themselves to be indeed only children in the presence of a stern and judicious father. The result was that for several years the Iroquois ceased to molest the French, and the savage prowess of their young warriors found vent in long and bloody raids upon the scattered Indian tribes who occupied the forest region between the river Ohio and the Great Lakes.

As soon as the palisades and intrenchments were finished, the governor returned to Montreal, leaving at Cataraqui as many as were necessary to hold the place. In the following July, as we have already learned, Louis Joliet, on his way home from the discovery of the Mississippi, stopped a few days at the new fort. There, if we may credit reports, he met the governor's most trusted friend, Robert Cavelier de la Salle, and to him he gave a glowing account of what he had seen in the distant West—of the lakes, the rivers, the forests, the prairies, and the boundless resources of the region which he, with Father Marquette, had been the first to traverse. We know that it had been one of La Salle's dreams to discover a water way across the continent to the Pacific. Joliet's narrative showed him that some of his theories were false, and that the Mississippi must find its outlet, not into the South Sea, as he had imagined, but into the Gulf of Mexico. In such case, what might not be gained by bringing all that part of the continent under French control, and establishing a monopoly of trade in the valley of the newly discovered river?

II. FORT FRONTENAC

La Salle was above all a man of action, and before the end of autumn he was on shipboard, bound for France, to lay his plans before the king. In his pocket he
1674 carried a letter from Count Frontenac, saying that the bearer was a man of intelligence and ability, and “more capable than any one else to accomplish any kind of enterprise.”

The letter must have had the desired effect, for the king listened to the young man with marked interest and granted all that he asked. He made him owner and governor of the seignory of Cataraqui, which included both the new fort and the adjacent lands with a water front of twelve miles; he granted him the exclusive right to much of the fur trade in the West — enough to insure him great wealth; and he raised him to the rank of a nobleman of France. No man could have asked for more; and when La Salle returned, the next summer, to Canada, his heart was full of hopes for the future.

In his wilderness home at Cataraqui he was now lord of all he surveyed. Around the fort — which he named Fort
1675 Frontenac — he built stone walls to take the place of the wooden palisades. Inside, he erected a blacksmith's shop, a mill, and roomy barracks for the soldiers. He placed nine small cannon on the walls, and put the place in good shape to resist any attack. He founded near at hand a village of French families who cleared a hundred acres of land and planted it in grain. He brought a number of cattle from Montreal, to be

pastured upon the meadow lands of Cataraqui. He began the building of some small vessels to be used in carrying on trade with the natives on the farther shore of the lake. In these and in many other ways he proved himself worthy of the high commendation he had carried to the king.

But, with all his apparent prosperity, he had many enemies and their number was increasing every day. He was a silent man, slow to confide in others, and never asking their advice. Men said that he was haughty and overbearing, and this may have been true. The merchants of Montreal hated him, because he had taken from them a part of their trade in furs; the Jesuits regarded him with suspicion, because he was the governor's friend and the governor was their enemy; the Sulpicians were bitter against him, because he did not exert himself to forward their interests; men who had once been his friends were now arrayed against him, because they were jealous of his prosperity. Nevertheless, he changed none of his plans, but held firmly to the purpose which he had long had in mind. Fort Frontenac and the lordly estate of Cataraqui were but steps to far greater things.

In the meanwhile, La Salle was gathering from Indians and woods rangers and fur traders all the information that could be obtained about the country south of the Great Lakes. He wished particularly to find the easiest and shortest route from Canada to the Mississippi.

If you will look at any good map of that region you will see that there are many places where tributaries of the great rivers approach very close to tributaries of the lakes.

From Joliet, La Salle had heard of the portage between the Fox River and the Wisconsin, and also of that of Chicago. From other sources, he had learned that the Indians of the Southwest often brought their canoes to Lake Erie by way of the Wabash and the Maumee. He had been told also that near the southwest corner of Lake Michigan there is a river called the St. Joseph which at one place bends southward and almost touches a small tributary of the Mississippi. It was a part of La Salle's plan to open, by way of one of these four portages, a safe route to the Mississippi Valley, and thus extend his trade and the power of France through all that unexplored region.

Having matured his plans, he again sailed for France.

1677 He carried with him a memorial to be presented to the king's prime minister, in which, while outlining his projects, he gave a glowing description of the country northwest of the Ohio.

"It is nearly all so beautiful and fertile," he said; "so free from forests, and so full of meadows, brooks, and rivers; so abounding in fish, game, and venison, — that one can find there, in plenty and with little trouble, all that is needful for the support of flourishing colonies. The soil will produce everything that is raised in France. Flocks and herds can be left out at pasture all winter; and there are even native wild cattle which, instead of hair, have a fine wool that may answer for making cloth and hats."

He explained still further that a large and profitable trade in skins and buffalo wool might at once be estab-

lished in that region. And he suggested that, if a way could be opened to the mouth of the Mississippi, the greater part of this traffic might be carried on directly by ships from France instead of passing through Canada.

King Louis XIV. and his ministers were so impressed by these things that they granted to La Salle most of the privileges he desired. They confirmed his title to Fort Frontenac, and gave him the exclusive right to build forts in the country south of the Lakes, and to trade in the furs and other products of the Mississippi valley.

III. NIAGARA

Late in the following summer, La Salle returned to Canada. He brought with him a number of shipwrights and mechanics, and also sails, cordage, and anchors for a vessel which he proposed to build and launch on Lake Erie. With him came Henri Tonty, an Italian officer, who had become deeply interested in his plans and whom he had enlisted in his service. This man, as we shall see, proved to be his most faithful friend and helper in all his undertakings. 1678

At Fort Frontenac was another man who was to take a prominent part in the proposed exploration of the West. This man was Louis Hennepin, a Récollet friar who had come over from France three years before. He was of a restless, roving disposition, and by nature better fitted to be a *coureur de bois* than a priest. Since coming to Canada he had spent the most of his time at Fort Frontenac, where he busied himself building a chapel, preach-

ing to the Indian bands who had settled there, and enjoying the companionship of the soldiers. He also made long excursions into the Iroquois country, learned the Mohawk and the Algonquin languages, became expert in woodcraft, and inured himself to all the hardships of the forest. Upon La Salle's return from France, this erratic priest entered most heartily into his plans and offered to give him all the aid in his power.

In November everything was in readiness for the departure of La Salle's expedition. Sixteen men, under
1678 command of La Motte de Lussière, and accompanied by Father Hennepin, embarked in a small vessel which was expected to proceed directly to the mouth of the Niagara River. La Salle and Tonty, with the remainder of the company, sailed in another vessel for the same point; but, instead of going straight across the lake, they coasted along the south shore in order to visit some villages of the Iroquois and make sure of the friendship of those jealous lords of the forest.

In due time all arrived in safety, although not without peril and serious mishap, at the mouth of the Niagara. A palisaded house was built a little below the point where the present town of Lewiston stands, and in it a part of the supplies for the expedition were stored. Some of the materials for shipbuilding, brought from France, had been lost in the rough weather which had made the last days of the voyage so perilous; but the anchors and cables and most of the tools had been saved, and these were now landed.

A party of scouts with Father Hennepin were sent in

advance up the right bank of the river to find the easiest road around the falls, learn what obstacles must be overcome, and report whether it would be at all possible to carry tools and supplies up the toilsome way to the higher levels of the stream. It is impossible for us to imagine the feelings of these men as they approached the great cataract and the tremendous flood of waters burst upon their view. For sixty years these falls had been known to the French through hearsay from wandering Indians. It is not unlikely that more than one ranger of the woods, some Brulé or Nicolet, possibly La Salle himself, had visited the spot and gazed with rapt wonder upon the rushing, mighty waters. But they left no record behind them, and hence, so far as we know, the priest Hennepin and his companions were the real discoverers of Niagara. For, indeed, who shall be honored as the discoverer of any hitherto unknown thing if not the man who, from personal observation, first tells the world of its existence and appearance?

From the top of the cliff where tourists now stand to observe the Horseshoe Fall, Father Hennepin viewed the cataract with the enthusiasm which marked all his conduct. He drew a picture of the scene as it appeared to him—the first picture of the falls ever published, perhaps the first ever drawn. He afterwards described them as “a vast cadence of water, of which the Universe does not afford its parallel.” “The waters, falling from a height of five hundred feet,” he says, “do foam and boil after the most hideous manner imaginable, making outrageous noise more terrible than that of thunder; for when

the wind blows out of the south, their dismal roaring may be heard more than fifteen leagues distant.'

In the meanwhile much dissatisfaction was breeding at the little fort at the mouth of the river. Many of the men, disheartened because of the difficulties to be overcome, were ready to give up the enterprise before it had been fairly begun; and some, being in the pay of La Salle's enemies at Montreal, were on the point of open mutiny. The captain, La Motte de Lussière, was himself suspected of doing what he could to increase this ill feeling, and he was permitted to return to Fort Frontenac. In the end the strong will of the commander prevailed, and arrangements for building a ship above the falls were soon completed. La Salle and Tonty went forward to find a suitable place for the work. They selected a little cove about six miles above the falls, where the stream now called Cayuga Creek flows into the Niagara. To this

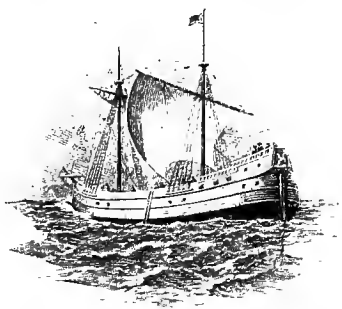
1679 spot, late in January, the men began to carry the tools, the cordage, and the anchors. It was no easy matter to lift their heavy burdens up the steep cliffs, to the plateau above, and to carry them nearly twenty miles over the rough, unbroken country; but, wading through snow and slush, all struggled bravely forward and in time reached the appointed place. Father Hennepin, rugged and strong, carried an altar strapped upon his back, and cheered the lagging ones by his enthusiasm.

As soon as the materials for the ship were on the ground, La Salle put Tonty in charge of the work and hastened back to the mouth of the Niagara, where he began the construction of a blockhouse to serve as a base

of supplies for the expedition. But when the spring thaws had begun and the ice had disappeared, he left this post in charge of a few trusted men, and returned, on foot, along the north shore of Lake Ontario, to Fort Frontenac and his estate of Cataraqui. It was high time that he was there; for his enemies were slandering him, his creditors were seizing upon his goods, and everything was in a state of confusion.

On the Niagara, however, Tonty was pushing forward the work on the ship.

Trees were cut down; a forge was built; the mechanics from France were busy hewing, planing, and fitting the framework of the vessel. There were no idlers at Cayuga Creek, save some straggling Iroquois, who loitered around the camp and threatened all kinds of mischief to



The Griffon

the workers. They were angry at this invasion of their country, and declared that they would burn the ship as soon as she was finished.

Early in May the vessel was ready to be launched. She was a bark of sixty tons, and well built in every part. Her sides were pierced with five portholes, from each of which a small cannon peeped forth. Upon her prow the workmen had carved the figure of a griffin supporting the arms of Count Frontenac; and for this reason she

was called the *Griffon*. As she slid into the water, Father Hennepin pronounced a blessing upon her, the workmen and crew sang the *Te Deum*, the cannon were fired, and the visiting Indians howled in chorus. She was then towed out into the stream and anchored where the treacherous Iroquois could do her no harm.

IV. THE GRIFFON

Nearly three months passed before La Salle returned from Fort Frontenac. Tonty and a few trusted boatmen embarked in canoes, intending to paddle along
1679 the northern shore of Lake Erie to some point near the mouth of the Detroit, where it was expected that the *Griffon* would overtake them. The rest of the men waited impatiently for the arrival of their leader. Early in August he came, bringing with him two more priests, Zenobe Membré and Gabriel Ribourde, Récollet brothers who desired to carry the faith to the savages of the far West. On the 7th of the month all was in readiness, and the *Griffon*, first of ships to sail on the Great Lakes, was loosed from her anchorage. She was towed with ropes to a point near the outlet of Lake Erie; then the sails were spread, and the voyage was begun.

Three days later the stanch little vessel entered the Detroit, and there Tonty and his men were taken on board. The winds were favorable, and in a short time the voyagers were gladdened at beholding and entering the sea-like expanse of Lake Huron. Keeping within sight of the Michigan shore, they held steadily on their way

northward. But now a storm arose; the wind blew a hurricane; the waves seemed mountain high; the timbers of the little bark creaked and groaned; and the crew feared every moment that she would go to pieces. At length, however, they outrode the storm; and, passing the cliffs of Mackinac Island, they beheld the point of St. Ignace and the village of Mackinac close at hand. The *Griffon* rounded to in front of the mission; the five cannon were fired off by way of salute, and soon a hundred canoes filled with wondering savages were swarming around the vessel. La Salle, clad in a gorgeous robe of scarlet and gold, was the first to land. Then, with his men, the friars and soldiers and sailors and traders, he entered the bark chapel and heard the priests of the mission say mass.



"La Salle was the first to land"

After resting a few days at Mackinac, the company again embarked, and the *Griffon* sailed onward, skirting the northern shore of Lake Michigan, and at length arriving without mishap at the head of Green Bay, still called

by the French the Bay of the Fetid. They cast anchor near the mouth of Fox River, and for a short time were the guests of the priests who had succeeded Father Allouez in the mission of St. Francis Xavier. La Salle was pleased to find at this place several traders whom he had sent on before him to buy furs and have them in readiness for the coming of the ship. By the commission which he held from the king he was expressly forbidden to trade with the Indians of this region, for this right belonged to the licensed merchants of Montreal and a fur-trading association known as the Company of Canada. But when he saw the pelts and rich furs which his traders had gathered there, he was willing enough to take them; and he decided to load them upon the *Griffon* and send her back to Niagara, whence her cargo could be carried to Fort Frontenac and afterward shipped to France.

This first shipload of furs, so quickly although illegally obtained, would prove to the king that La Salle had not overrated the wealth of the great Northwest. But what of the traders of Montreal whose rights he had invaded? They were already his enemies, and now they would be ten times more bitter against him.

It was about the middle of September when the *Griffon*, loaded with a great store of furs, started on her homeward voyage. She had on board a pilot and six
1679 other men, and the furs and skins that she carried were worth a handsome fortune. She was scarcely well out upon Lake Michigan when a strong gale sprang up, lashed the waters into fury, and then suddenly died away. Whether the *Griffon* foundered in that gale,

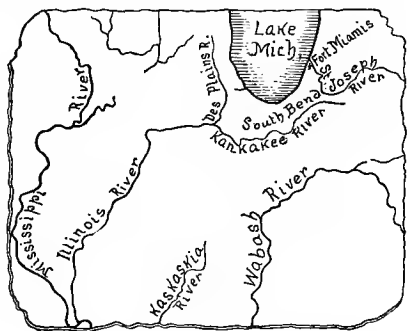
or whether she rode safely through it, nobody knows. Some said that while she was making her slow way along the coast, unfriendly savages waylaid her in their canoes, murdered her crew, and sunk her in the lake. Others said that the crew themselves ran her ashore in order to steal her precious cargo — and this last tale was believed by La Salle to be the true one. All that we know to a certainty is that the vessel never returned to Niagara, and was never again heard of.

V. THE ST. JOSEPH

On the day after the sailing of the *Griffon*, La Salle, with fourteen men and four canoes, started to cruise southward along the west shore of Lake Michigan. Tonty, with another party, was sent across the lake to explore the east shore. He was to meet La Salle at the mouth of the St. Joseph River.

And now many perils beset the voyagers. There were storms almost every day, and La Salle's party was often obliged to find refuge in some sheltered cove or inlet.

Their progress was very slow. Food was hard to find, and they were more than once on the point of starvation. On some days they had nothing to eat but a handful of



corn; and once they were glad to feast on the carcass of a deer which the buzzards had begun to devour. They passed several Indian villages, and in some of them were entertained with kindness and supplied with food. Near the southern end of the lake they met a band of warriors who threatened to attack them; but a parley was called, and after La Salle had explained that his errand was a peaceful one, the savages laid down their arms and offered to help the strangers on their way.

On the first day of November La Salle and his party arrived at the mouth of the St. Joseph. But Tonty had not come; and so, while waiting for him, the men busied

1679 themselves chopping down trees and building a fort, which they surrounded with palisades. Three weeks were spent at this task before Tonty and his men made their appearance; and it was not until the 3d of December that the party was ready to leave Fort Miamis—as the place was named—and renew the journey.

Ten men remained at the fort to wait for the *Griffon*, which had been ordered to sail there on her return from Niagara. La Salle and the remaining thirty-three embarked in eight canoes upon the St. Joseph. The river was already beginning to show signs of ice upon its surface, and the meadows and woods had put on the dreary, brown vesture of winter. The party paddled briskly up the stream, helped along by the sharp northwest wind which blew steadily their way, and, while chilling them to the bone, lessened their labor and increased their speed.

VI. THE KANKAKEE

At length, near the place where now stands the city of South Bend, their guides found the portage of which La Salle had been informed. Carrying their canoes, with their arms and tools and a blacksmith's forge and merchandise for trading with the Indians, they painfully made their way over half-frozen marshes to the Kankakee River, five miles south. Then, embarking on this sluggish tributary of the Illinois, they followed its westward course through dismal swamps and thickets of underbrush where often the stream was scarcely wide enough to permit two canoes to float abreast.

Presently the scene changed, and they emerged into the open prairie, now brown and sere and desolate. The whole country seemed like a barren desert. No game was to be found, and the men began to suffer from hunger. One day, to their great joy, they came upon a buffalo stuck fast in the oozy ground near the river. He was so large that after they had killed him it took twelve men to haul him out of the mud; but they loaded a canoe with the carcass, and for many days thereafter they feasted on steaks and chops to their hearts' content.

By and by they emerged from the Kankakee into the Illinois, a pleasant river flowing through a broad valley bordered on one side by low grass-covered hills. Soon the stream widened, and the canoes glided among small islands, and between shores lined with groves of slender trees and dense underwoods. Presently, on their left, they passed the ribbed precipice, afterward known as the

Great Rock, and still later as Starved Rock, the tree-clad summit of which jutted over the water's edge.

Only a short distance below this place, the voyagers saw an Indian village close by the shore. It was a village of Ottawas, and contained four hundred wigwams; but the people had gone away on their winter hunt, and every wigwam was empty. Searching through the village some of the men found a store of corn which the Indians had hidden in pits, and of this they took about fifty bushels, promising themselves to pay the owners in case they should ever meet them.

VII. CRÈVECŒUR

It was near the lower end of that expansion of the river, now known as Peoria Lake, that the first Indians were met. At sight of the long line of canoes approaching their village the savages were much alarmed. The warriors snatched their weapons and ran yelling to the water's edge; the squaws screamed with terror; and the children hid themselves in the huts. For a few moments there was general confusion, and the savages made as though they would attack the canoes. But La Salle, unarmed, boldly landed; and the chiefs, seeing that he meant no harm, went to meet him, bearing the calumet, or pipe of peace.

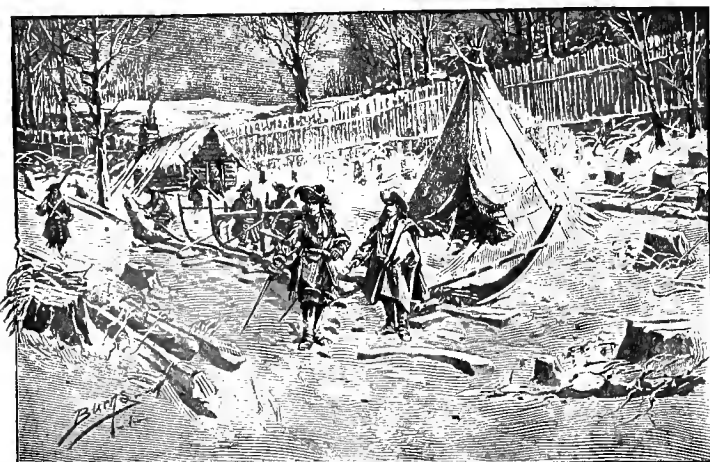
Soon the alarm was at an end. Presents of tobacco and hatchets were given to the Indians, and Father Hennepin busied himself making friends with the children. Food was placed before the strangers, and the savages rendered

them honor by rubbing their feet with bear's grease. A council was called, and after the peace pipe had been smoked, La Salle explained to the assembled warriors that he had come into their country to open a way for traders who would bring them many things that they desired. And he promised that, if they would allow him to build a fort in their country, he would protect them from the Iroquois, who were beginning to send their dreaded war parties into that distant region. The savages listened with attention and then agreed to do all that he wished. They told him that they were Illinois and loved peace, that although they were content with the few necessities which they already possessed, still, if the traders should come among them they would be welcome.

But, notwithstanding his seeming good fortune, La Salle began to feel that much trouble was ahead. He fancied that the Indians were not sincere in their promises, and he believed that his enemies had sent agents among them to poison their minds against him. Two of his best mechanics deserted him, and some others who could be easier spared were missing. The chief of the village advised him not to venture upon the Mississippi. Its shores, he said, were infested by dreadful monsters, while the river itself was full of dangerous whirlpools which would surely swallow up his canoes. La Salle thanked him for his kind advice, but gave him to understand that no dangers, however great, would prevent him from carrying out his plans. The mechanics and canoemen, however, who listened to the old chief's

warnings, were very much disturbed, and some of them flatly refused to go farther.

Seeing that he could not prevail upon these mutinous fellows and that it would be folly to go forward without them, La Salle decided to build a fort near by, and to remain there until the coming of spring, when the voyage would be attended with fewer risks and discomforts.



"La Salle named the fort Crève-cœur"

On the east side of the river, some distance from the Indian village, there was a high knoll with marshy ravines on both sides, and this he chose as a suitable spot. A deep ditch was dug around the farther side of the knoll, so as to connect the two ravines. Earthworks were then thrown up, the sides of which sloped directly down to the inner edge of the ditch and the marshes. Inside of the earthworks, palisades twenty-five feet high

were planted so as to inclose a large rectangular space. At two of the corners of this space log huts were built for the men to lodge in; at a third corner was a small house for Father Hennepin and the two other priests that were with him; and at the fourth was a shop where the forge was set up and the tools kept. In the center stood the tents of La Salle and Tonty.

La Salle named the fort Crèvecoeur — heartbreak. Whether he did this because of his many disappointments and his failure at this time to reach the Mississippi no one can tell. More likely, however, he called it so in memory of an ancient French fortress of the same name in which his family had an interest. It was now midwinter, and while waiting for the coming of milder weather, La Salle laid the keel of a vessel in which he meant to sail down the Mississippi. It was forty-two feet long with a beam breadth of twelve feet, and the deck was surrounded with high bulwarks as a protection against hostile Indians. 1680

The winter passed, but to La Salle at his lonely fort on the Illinois no news came from the lakes or from the more distant St. Lawrence. What had been the fate of the men left behind at Fort Miamis? Had the *Griffon* made a successful voyage to Niagara, and had she returned to Lake Michigan with supplies and reinforcements as had been directed? To solve these questions and to bring to Fort Crèvecoeur more men and the necessary equipments for his new vessel, La Salle decided to return to the lakes. The fort was already completed, and the little ship was well begun. Tonty would remain

in command of the post, while others of his most trusted companions would explore the Illinois River to its mouth and prepare the way for the expedition down the Mississippi. For this latter undertaking three men were chosen: Michel Accault, a brave and faithful woods ranger, skilled in all the lore of savage life, Father Hennepin, and a hunter known as Le Picard du Gay.

Father Hennepin had no great desire to leave his comfortable quarters at Fort Crève-cœur and brave the uncertain dangers of the wilderness. But La Salle urged him to go, and his brother priests encouraged him by telling him that if he died on the way he would find his sure reward in heaven. "True, my son," said the aged Father Ribourde, "you will have many monsters to overcome, and precipices to pass, in this enterprise which requires the strength of the most robust; you do not know a word of the language of the tribes whom you are going to try to win for God—but take courage, you will gain as many victories as you have combats." Thus encouraged, the reluctant friar at last consented to go.

"Anybody but me," he afterwards wrote, "would have been very much frightened at the dangers of such a journey; and, in fact, if I had not placed all my trust in God, I should not have been the dupe of the Sieur de la Salle, who exposed my life so rashly."

On the last day of February the three explorers, Accault, Hennepin, and Du Gay, began their adventurous
1680 voyage. Their canoe contained a quantity of tobacco, cloth, knives, and trinkets, to be given to the Indians whom they should meet; and with Du Gay

at the stern paddle it glided rapidly down the now swollen stream.

On the very next day, La Salle himself, with four Frenchmen and an Indian, also departed from Fort Crève-cœur; but his canoe was turned upstream and his destination was the lower lakes and Fort Frontenac. Toiling slowly against the current, it was not until several days later that he passed under the shadow of that remarkable cliff, the Great Rock. As he looked up at its steep sides of yellow sandstone, he observed how easily it might be fortified and defended against any enemy. During the rest of his journey the thought of this natural stronghold often came into his mind; and when he reached Fort Miamis he sent back a messenger with a letter to Tonty, bidding him, in case of need, to abandon Crève-cœur and take refuge on the rock.

THE UPPER MISSISSIPPI

I. ACCAULT AND HENNEPIN

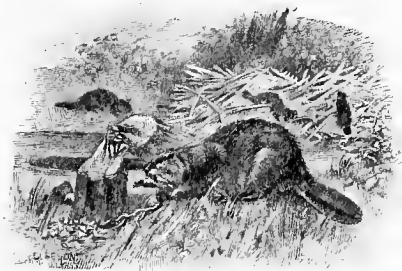
WHILE La Salle is returning to Fort Frontenac, let us follow Michel Accault and Father Hennepin on their adventurous tour into unknown wilds. We have only Hennepin's journal to tell us of their wanderings; and it is so full of falsehoods that we cannot always sift out the truth. He makes it appear that he, and not Accault, was the leader of the party; and he claims for himself the honor of all the discoveries that were made. And yet he should not be judged too harshly; for he gave to the world the first account of the upper Mississippi, of which he was in truth the discoverer.

The explorers floated down the Illinois without meeting with any adventure, and on one of the first days in March their canoe shot out into the broad current of the Mississippi. What now should they do? Should they return to Fort Crèvecœur and report no new lands discovered, no savages converted? Or should they push boldly onward and seek adventures in regions more remote? Why not turn their canoe downstream and follow the river's course to the great Gulf — thus forestalling the enterprise which La Salle was planning to accomplish? Father Hennepin afterwards claimed that this was what they actually did,

but this part of his story is so improbable and so full of contradictions that nobody believes a word of it.

La Salle had directed Accault to explore the upper course of the river and, if possible, follow it to its hidden source; and it was therefore to this enterprise that the party really addressed themselves. They turned their canoe to the right, and began a toilsome voyage up the Mississippi.

The air was raw and damp, and the river was full of ice; but spring had already opened, and the woods and prairies were beginning to put on their livery of green. Keeping quite near to the leeward shore, they avoided both the ice and the swifter current. They killed more game than they needed — deer, wild turkeys, and now and then a bison or a bear. Along the woodland streams many beavers were seen. Fish, too, were abundant and easily taken. Every morning and night the friar said prayers, not omitting the angelus at noon; and each day he besought St. Anthony of Padua to protect them from harm.



“Beavers were seen”

II. THE SIOUX

Full of enthusiasm and buoyed with high hopes, the explorers held bravely on their way; and, as no serious mishap befell them, they began to feel careless of danger.

They passed the mouth of the Wisconsin, and on the 11th of April landed near the place where the city of Lacrosse now stands. Here, while cooking a turkey for dinner, they were surprised by a war party of Sioux who came sweeping down the river in thirty-three bark canoes. The naked savages, of whom there were more than a hundred, leaped on shore, and with hideous yells surrounded the astonished voyagers. It was their intention rather to frighten than to injure, but they soon learned that the three explorers were not so easily terrified. Hennepin held out the calumet, and one of the savages snatched it away. He offered them some tobacco, "better for smoking than theirs," and they received it with pleasure. They then gave him to understand that they were on their way to fight the Miamis; and when the friar, by the aid of signs, explained that the Miamis had fled to the eastward and were beyond their reach, the chiefs laid their hands on his head and set up a dismal wailing.

The savages would not smoke the peace pipe with the Frenchmen, but held them as captives. In a short time the whole flotilla started up the Mississippi, struggling hard against the current and making but slow progress. Several Indians took their places in the Frenchmen's canoe and helped with the paddling. At night they camped on the banks. When the weather was fair they slept on the bare ground; but when it rained they built little huts of bark and green branches. Every morning at daybreak an old man shouted aloud the signal for departure; and then the warriors leaped into their canoes and plied their paddles against the current, sometimes without

having tasted of breakfast. At one time a bear was killed, and the whole party stopped to dance the medicine dance and have a great feast. Sometimes they landed for a buffalo hunt on the neighboring prairies. There was



“The whole party stopped to dance the medicine dance”

plenty of meat, and both the Indians and their captives fared sumptuously.

On the nineteenth day after the capture of the Frenchmen, the party came to the expansion of the river a short distance below the spot where now stands the city of St. Paul. There the Indians hid their canoes in a thicket of

alder bushes near the shore. They then divided the goods of the Frenchmen among themselves and broke Hennepin's canoe in pieces.

All then started across the country on foot, steering their way directly towards the homes of the Sioux. The Indians, being tall and active, walked with great speed, and it was with much difficulty that the friar and his companions could keep up with them. Their course was nearly due north.

Ice still lingered on the ponds and marshes, and Hennepin almost perished with cold while wading and swimming the many streams that crossed their path. Accault and Du Gay, being small men, fared better than the tall friar, for the Indians carried them on their backs across the deepest water ways. Sometimes when Hennepin, from sheer weariness, lagged in the march, his captors set fire to the grass behind him, and then, seizing him by the hands, ran forward to escape the flames, dragging him after them.

On the fifth day of this painful journey the party reached a village of bark huts near a lake, probably the same water now known as Mille Lacs. Here the captive explorers found some sort of release from their troubles. The shrewd Indians had already had some profitable dealings with the French traders on Lake Superior, and they had no intention of harming their prisoners. Savage and warlike though they were, these terrors of the distant West seldom practised the dreadful cruelties that were so common with the Iroquois. For the present it was their policy to cultivate the friendship of the white strangers who had so lately become their neighbors.

III. THE CAPTIVES

An agreement was soon made concerning the captives. Hennepin was assigned to an old chief who had formerly treated him very harshly, but who now adopted him as his son. Accault and Du Gay were given to other chiefs, and the three explorers were obliged to part. The friar was forced to follow his adoptive father several miles through woods and marshes to another small lake, which Hennepin called Lake Buade, and which he said was about seventy leagues west of Lake Superior. There some canoes were waiting, and the party was ferried to an island where the chief had his home. 1680

At the door of the wigwam an old Indian, withered with age, welcomed the captive priest and offered him a peace pipe. He then led him to the fire, and, having placed him on a bearskin that was spread before it, he rubbed his legs and feet with the fat of a wild-cat. His new father soon afterward introduced him to six or seven of his wives, and told him that he was to regard them as his mothers. He then gave him a platter of broiled fish, and covered him with a robe made of ten beaver skins, embroidered with porcupine quills.

Seeing that Hennepin was too weak to rise from the ground without help, his father made a sweating bath for him. Four Indians led him naked to a small hut covered with buffalo skins, and, when they had entered, every crack or opening in the walls was tightly closed. Red-hot stones were lying on the ground, and upon these water was poured until the place was filled with steam.

The Indians then began to sing "in a thundering voice," and all laid hands on the poor friar and rubbed him unmercifully, "while they wept bitterly." He was obliged to submit to this heroic treatment three times a week, until he felt as strong as ever.

About the middle of summer the Indians started southward on a great buffalo hunt. There were more than two hundred warriors in the party, besides all their women



"Waited in vain for some one to invite him to go along"

and children. Father Hennepin saw them embark on the Rum River — or St. Francis, as he called it — and waited in vain for some one to invite him to go along.

To his great disappointment, however, there seemed to be no room for him in any of the crowded canoes, and he became alarmed lest he should be left behind alone in the deserted village. He stood on the bank and hailed

the passing vessels as they glided swiftly down the stream, but none of the Indians listened to him. Soon Accault and Du Gay came past in a small canoe which they had borrowed, and he called to them. But Accault, who hated him because of his boastful and overbearing manner, answered, "We have already paddled too long for you!" and they left him.

At last two Indians consented to take him on condition that he would bail the water out of their canoe; and, as it was quite full of little holes, he had quite enough to do.

Four days after their departure the band reached the Mississippi at the place where now stands the town of Anoka, Minnesota. There the Indians made a grand encampment on the west side of the river, and there they staid several days until they had eaten up all their provisions and were threatened with famine. The three Frenchmen had no food except unripe berries which disagreed with them and made them sick; and Hennepin says they might all have died had it not been for some magical pills which he happened to have with him.

One day the friar and Du Gay made up a story, which they told to their captors, of some French traders who, they said, were expected to visit the Wisconsin at about that time. They asked permission to go in search of them, and used every argument to persuade the Sioux that this would be to their mutual advantage. The chiefs, after much parleying, agreed to let them go; but Accault, who was a favorite with the savages, and enjoyed nothing so much as the wild freedom of the woods and prairies, preferred to stay and take part in the great hunt.

IV. THE GRAND HUNT

It was near the end of July when Hennepin and Du Gay embarked in a wretched, leaking canoe and began their lonely voyage. They had only a gun with
1680 fifteen charges of powder, an earthen pot, a knife, and a beaver robe which the Indians had given them; but they set out with brave hearts, expecting to make a journey of two hundred leagues before seeing the faces of friends.

They had floated down with the current about twenty-five miles when their progress was interrupted by great waterfalls. They drew their canoe to the shore and stood admiring the wild grandeur of the scene, little dreaming that this charming but solitary place would become the site of a busy city more populous than any they had ever seen. Father Hennepin called these falls the Falls of St. Anthony, in honor of his patron saint, Anthony of Padua. In the book which he published some years later he described them as being forty or fifty feet in height and of surpassing beauty. Around them on both sides now lies the city of Minneapolis with its humming mills, its busy traffic, and its thousands of pleasant homes.

The two men did not stop long. They shouldered their canoe and carried it around the cataract to launch it upon the smooth water below. Five Indians were sitting among the branches of an oak tree overlooking the principal fall, and praying in woeful tones to the great manitou of the waters, while on another tree hung a rich

robe of beaver skins which the savages had hung there to appease the spirit of the falls.

The voyagers again launched their canoe, and, gliding in the shadow of limestone bluffs, looked up at the sloping heights whereon St. Paul, the capital city of Minnesota, was in time to be built, with its palatial homes and terraced lawns and magnificent views. First of white men to penetrate to this remote spot, Father Hennepin, with all his lively imagination, was unable to foresee the wonderful changes that were to transform this region from a solitary wilderness to a fruitful garden and a busy mart of human industry.

Onward down the great river they sped, having more care for their personal safety than for the grand scenery which opened on either hand. Game was so scarce that they were hard set for food and at times were on the point of starvation. Finally, however, after having fasted for forty-eight hours, Du Gay succeeded in killing a buffalo cow. Hennepin hastily cooked some morsels of the fat meat, and both ate so eagerly that they were sick for two days.

"Never have we more admired God's providence than during this voyage," says the friar; "for, although we did not always find deer, and could not kill them when we did, yet the eagles which are very common in those vast countries sometimes dropped from their claws large carp which they were carrying to their nests."

Soon after passing through Lake Pepin, Hennepin was astonished to meet the old Sioux, his savage father, whom he supposed to be a hundred miles behind. The chief

appeared to be in excellent good humor, and gave the voyagers some wild rice and a slice of buffalo meat to eat. He then hastened onward in advance of them, hoping to meet at the mouth of the Wisconsin the Frenchmen of whom Hennepin had told him, and to "carry off what he could from them." Of course he did not find them, and three days later he returned to Hennepin and Du Gay. He told them that there were three hundred Sioux Indians hunting buffaloes farther up the river, and advised them to give up their voyage and go back with him. This they decided to do, and all set out in search of the hunters' camp.

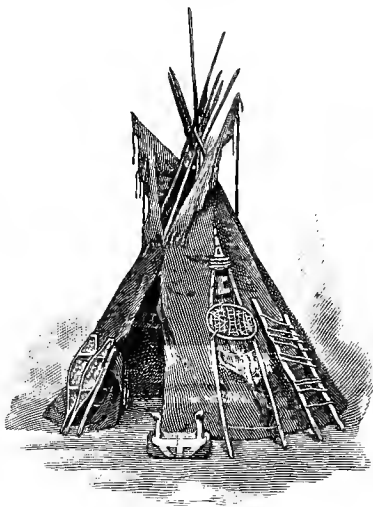
The next day they met the Indians and were welcomed with as much kindness as savages are wont to show to their friends. Their old comrade, Accault, was with the hunters, and all enmity between him and Hennepin was soon forgotten. There was a grand hunt on the open prairie, and a great many buffaloes were slain; and in a few days the whole party, having laid up a plenteous supply of meat, turned their faces homeward, slowly retracing their way up the right bank of the Mississippi.

About this time two squaws, coming from the Lake Superior region, reported that they had met "five spirits" — five white men — who were on their way to the Sioux country from the North. Hennepin, full of anxiety to know who these strangers were, hastened forward toward the place where they were said to be; but before reaching the Falls of St. Anthony he met them coming down the river. They were Daniel Duluth, and four other well-armed Frenchmen.

V. DULUTH

Who was this Daniel Duluth? He was a cousin of Tonty, the friend of La Salle, and one of the most adventurous *coureurs de bois* of his time. In the autumn of 1679 he first visited the country of the Sioux west of Lake Superior, landing not far from where the city named in his honor now stands. The fur traders of Montreal claimed that either Frontenac or La Salle had sent him there to buy furs, contrary to the law or agreement which had given to the Company of Canada the monopoly of trade in that

1680 region. In the following summer he again returned to the head of the lake, having in his company an Indian interpreter and four Frenchmen. He was intent upon finding a water way into the heart of the Sioux country, and with two light canoes started up the Bois Brulé, a little river which enters the lake from the south. This voyage was not an easy one; for the current was often obstructed by brushwood and fallen trees, and in its upper course the stream was almost lost in weedy marshes. After making many portages, however, the party launched their canoes



A Sioux wigwam

upon another little river, the waters of which flow southward. It was the stream now known as the St. Croix, and upon it the explorers floated without mishap down to the Mississippi. Duluth was filled with enthusiasm. He supposed himself to be much farther west than was really the case, and he believed that the river which he had now entered must, within a short distance, flow into the Gulf of California.

While resting a few days at the mouth of the St. Croix, he learned from some straggling Sioux that the warriors of their tribe were near at hand, returning home from the summer's hunt, and that they had three white men with them. Duluth was anxious to know who these men were, and so made all haste to meet the hunters as they were coming up the river. When he saw Hennepin and his two companions he was overjoyed, for he had feared that the white strangers might prove to be Spaniards or Englishmen exploring a region which the French claimed as their own.

Soon after this unexpected meeting the eight white men parted from the Sioux, who had now become quite friendly, and set out together on their return to Canada. They floated slowly down the Mississippi, stopping often to hunt on the prairies which bordered its banks. Game was plentiful, and they tarried several days at the mouth of the Wisconsin, drying the flesh of the buffaloes which they had killed. Autumn was well advanced when they crossed the portage where Joliet and Marquette had passed in the opposite direction, seven years before, and embarked on the Fox River, which Hennepin described as "a stream

which winds wonderfully." They visited the village where the Miamis had formerly dwelt, but found there only some Mascoutins and Kickapoos and a band of wild Outagamis, or Fox Indians.

Near the mouth of the river they met some Frenchmen who were there trading with the Indians in defiance of orders from the governor. Father Hennepin was no doubt kindly entertained at the mission of St. Francis Xavier, for he says that "all our Frenchmen went to confession and communion, to thank God for having preserved us amid so many wanderings and perils;" and yet, since the station was in charge of the Jesuits and not of his own Order of Récollets, he carefully omits all mention of it.



" Barefeet is a spirit "

After a stay of only two days at Green Bay, the party pushed onward to Mackinac, where they were obliged to stay all winter. In the spring, before the ice had melted from the lakes, Hennepin parted from Duluth and started, with several Frenchmen and Indians, for the settlements on the St. Lawrence. When he arrived at Fort Frontenac, a few weeks later, his friends welcomed him as one risen from the dead; for they had heard that the Sioux had hanged him with the cord which he wore

about his waist. The Indians at the fort also crowded around him, putting their hands to their mouths in token of wonder, and saying, "Barefeet is a spirit to have traveled so far."

VI. TONTY AND MEMBRÉ

Let us return now to Fort Crèvecœur on the Illinois. Tonty, who had been left in charge of that station, found
1680 it no easy matter to control the rude men who composed the garrison. All were heartily sick of the enterprise in which they had engaged, and some were openly mutinous. Early in April two messengers arrived whom La Salle had sent back from Fort Miamis on the St. Joseph. They brought a letter to Tonty, advising him to abandon Fort Crèvecœur and remove to the Great Rock. They also told doleful tales of their leader's inability to carry out his plans, and enlarged upon his haughtiness and his cruelty. The discontent increased; and one day when Tonty was absent the men destroyed the palisades, stole all they could carry away, and deserted the place. Only three persons besides the priests, Membré and Ribourde, remained faithful to their leader. Tonty might now have returned to the lakes; but, after talking the matter over, his little company decided to go to the Illinois village near the Great Rock, and stay there until La Salle should come back from Canada. The Indians seemed glad to have their company, and the six white men passed the summer pleasantly in their wigwams.

The two priests spent their time in trying to teach the

savages some of the principles of religion and morality; but, as Father Membre relates, they found them "idle, fearful, irritable, and thievish," and so brutal and corrupt that it was almost impossible to make them better.

As for Tonty, he too was busy. He taught the savages how to use firearms, and persuaded them to build a little fort with intrenchments for the protection of their village. But he found them to be most arrant cowards, and very averse to fighting.

One day, early in the fall, a Shawnee Indian came down the river bringing fearful news. He said that he had seen a large band of Iroquois, four or five hundred strong, marching across the prairie toward the Illinois towns, and destroying everything that fell in their way. In the village there was now the greatest confusion. The women and children were hastily sent away to an island several miles below, and the men made ready to defend their homes as best they could.

The very next day the enemy was upon them — savage Iroquois and fierce Miamis in great numbers. The cowardly Illinois, even with the help of the Frenchmen, could not have stood long before such foes as these. Under pretense of giving themselves up, they induced the Iroquois to delay the attack; and then they fled down the river to join their women and children. The Iroquois would have killed the six white men, had they not been reminded that their nation was then at peace with the French, and that Onontio, the great white father, would fearfully avenge any injury that might be done to his children. As it was, the chiefs advised Tonty to

escape from the place without delay, for they would not be able long to control their hot-spirited young braves.

In a leaking canoe, the six men embarked upon the river and paddled upstream with all the speed they could make. Through the night and till noon the next day they toiled onward, fearing every moment to be overtaken or waylaid by their savage enemies. At last the canoe became so full of leaks that they were obliged to stop and mend it. While the men were at this work, the aged Father Ribourde walked out into the woods, repeating his breviary as he went. He never returned. His friends sought for him on both sides of the river, and, despite the danger they were in, waited about the spot for twenty-four hours before renewing their journey. They afterward learned that three wandering Kickapoos had waylaid him not far from the landing, and, having killed him, had hidden his body in the earth. A few weeks later these same Kickapoos appeared in the Indian villages near Green Bay, having the scalp of the murdered priest, which they boasted was that of an Iroquois chief.

There were now but four men with Tonty, and, still fearing pursuit by the Iroquois, they pushed forward in their frail canoe, not daring to tarry longer. They had no food except such as they could find, and were obliged to live on acorns and wild onions and such small animals as happened to come in their way. Very soon their canoe failed them altogether, and they were forced to make the rest of their journey by land. They were barefooted, and the ground was covered with snow and ice; but Father

Membre made shoes for himself and his companions from an old cloak that Father Ribourde had left with them.

For nearly a month they wandered through the woods and prairies, and, having no compass, sometimes found themselves in the evening back at the place they had started from in the morning. At last, more dead than alive, they reached a village of friendly Pottawattomies, where they were kindly nursed back to health and strength. The chief of this village had been to Montreal, and was well acquainted with the French people; and he boasted that there were but three great captains in the world, himself, Count Frontenac, and the Sieur de la Salle.

As soon as Tonty and his companions were strong enough to go onward again they set out, with some Indian guides, for Green Bay. The journey was made without mishap, and at the mission of St. Francis Xavier they found a most friendly welcome. The Jesuit missionaries
1681
entreated Tonty and the Récollet brother to be their guests through the winter. "We cannot sufficiently acknowledge the charity which these good fathers displayed toward us," wrote Membre.

All were grateful for the rest and security that were offered, and the generous invitation was accepted. As early in the spring, however, as the weather would permit, Father Membre set out for Mackinac, hoping to find news there from Canada. But Tonty remained a little longer at Green Bay.

TO THE GREAT RIVER'S MOUTH

I. AT FORT MIAMIS

AT the very time that Tonty and his four companions were wandering bewildered through the woods and prairies west of Lake Michigan, La Salle with canoes and supplies was hastening along the eastern shore of that lake toward the mouth of the St. Joseph. He tarried but a brief time at Fort Miamis, and then hurried onward.

1680 Following the same route as that of the previous year, he crossed the portage at South Bend, floated down the marsh-bordered Kankakee, and late in November arrived in the country of the Illinois.

He had with him six white men and an Indian, having left five men at Fort Miamis. As they paddled swiftly down the river they were startled and amazed at sight of the desolation which the marauding Iroquois had left behind them. The Ottawa village was in ashes. The Great Rock, farther down, was bare and tenantless. The village of the Illinois had been utterly destroyed. At Fort Crèvecoeur everything was in ruins; the palisades were broken down; the unfinished keel of the ship was in pieces, the savages having carried away every nail and bolt and bit of iron they could find.

Sick at heart, La Salle with his companions again embarked and paddled onward down the river. They passed

the spot where the Iroquois had overtaken the fleeing Illinois and had massacred their women and children with all the fiendish cruelty in which these savages excelled. Still urging their canoes onward, they finally arrived at the Mississippi. It was La Salle's first sight of the great river—the river which for years had been the subject of his thoughts and the goal of his ambition. His men offered to go with him, if he chose, to discover the mouth of the mighty stream. But his good judgment told him that, with so small a force, this would be folly. He wrote a letter for Tonty, and, having tied it on a tree overhanging the bank, he gave orders to return 1681 to the lakes. The beginning of the new year found him with eleven men again safely housed in the log fort near the mouth of the river St. Joseph.

The fort was in the country of the Miami, and several Indians belonging to various tribes of the middle Northwest were encamped in the neighborhood. During his intercourse with these savages, La Salle formed a plan to unite the Miami, the Shawnees, the Illinois, and their related tribes in a great league against the Iroquois. For, although the French were now nominally at peace with those terrors of the forest, he plainly saw that, unless their power was utterly crushed, they would offer a constant menace to the fur trade south of the lakes, and be a great obstacle to the success of his own ambitious projects.

During the winter La Salle held councils with many of the tribes, and persuaded them to join the league; and toward the end of May he went down to Mackinac to

gain the support of some of the more northern bands. What was his joy, on landing at that post, to meet his old comrade Tonty, whom he had almost given up as lost! The two friends related their adventures and talked over their plans, and the old project of exploring the Mississippi and establishing a line of trading posts to its mouth was revived. The Indian league was for a time forgotten, and, in June, La Salle and Tonty voyaged back to Fort Frontenac.

II. FROM FORT FRONTENAC TO NATCHEZ

La Salle found that his enemies had increased in number, and that his creditors were more unreasonable and more clamorous than ever. The former, among whom were both Jesuits and Sulpicians, he defied in a manner which only increased the bitterness of their hate; the latter he tried to conciliate by giving them a lien upon his estate of Cataraqui and upon all the profits which he hoped to gain from his western enterprise. But even this failed to satisfy them or win their friendship.

In August, with Tonty and a company of fifty-four persons, he again started for the Mississippi country. It was near the beginning of winter when all arrived at Fort Miamis. Here it was decided to leave some of the party while the rest went forward in two companies. Tonty, with most of the men, crossed the head of the lake to the mouth of the Chicago, and from that point the canoes were dragged on sledges over the frozen streams to the Illinois. La Salle, following the old

route down the Kankakee, overtook the first party near the mouth of the Des Plaines.

Not until after they had passed the site of Fort Crève-cœur was the river open enough to allow their canoes to float on the water. But below this point the adventurers found the middle of the stream free from ice; and so, launching their canoes, they paddled onward with the current. It was early in February when they arrived at the Mississippi. This mighty stream, 1682 at that time known as the River Colbert, was full of floating ice, and it was several days before La Salle deemed it safe to continue their voyage. At length, boldly embarking on its chilly waters, the explorers glided swiftly downward with the flood, now swollen by spring rains and the melting of northern snows. They passed the mouth of the unexplored Missouri—then called the Osage—and three days later reached the Ohio. La Salle beheld here a vast outpouring of water between low marshy banks and thickets of cane and underwoods, and did not realize that it was the same Belle Rivière whose upper courses he had explored more than thirteen years before. The Indians near its mouth called it the Ouabache (Wabash), and by that name its lower portion was generally known for half a century afterward.

A few days later the party encamped near the third Chickasaw Bluff in what is now the state of Tennessee. Here a hunter named Prudhomme strolled away from his fellows and was lost in the woods. On the top of the bluff La Salle built a stockade; and when, after

nine days, the hunter was found half dead from starvation, they named the place in his honor, Fort Prudhomme. Here Prudhomme was left with a few men to guard the stockade, and the others went on.

About the middle of March they reached a village of the Arkansas Indians. While staying with these hospitable people, La Salle planted a cross by the riverside, placed upon it the arms of France, and with great ceremony took possession of all the country in the name of King Louis XIV. Father Membré, who was with him, sang the *Exaudite te Dominus*, a volley of musketry was discharged, and the whole company shouted three times "Vive le roi!" The Indians, not understanding what was meant, looked on with delight, and joined in the general acclamation.

After three days spent at this place the party continued their voyage. About three hundred miles below the Arkansas they stopped to visit the great town of Taensas, which was built on a lake at some distance from the river. Tonty, in describing it afterward, said that he had never seen anything like it. The dwellings were large and square, built of sun-baked mud mixed with straw, and arched over with a dome-shaped roof made of reeds. The people were worshipers of the sun.

Lower down the river the Frenchmen came to a village of the Natchez Indians, where they tarried a little while. La Salle slept in the village, and was struck with the great difference between these people and any other savages he had ever seen. They also were sun-worshipers. Before leaving this place La Salle planted

in the midst of the village a wooden cross upon which were affixed the arms of France. The natives looked on with pleased wonder, believing that this was done in token of friendship to them.

III. LOUISIANA

On the last day of March the voyagers passed the mouth of the Red River, below which they found the natives not so friendly. A week later they reached a point where two large islands separate the river, causing it to flow in three channels. In order not to miss the right way, La Salle now divided his company. He himself took the right hand channel; his lieutenant led a party down the passage on the left; and Tonty with Father Membré and some others followed the middle current. The three parties reached the waters of the Gulf nearly at the same time, and on the 9th of April came together at the mouth of the middle outlet. 1682

A short distance above this place the whole company landed. Here a wooden column was raised, hymns were sung, a blessing was pronounced by Father Membré, and La Salle proclaimed in a loud voice, "In the name of Louis the Great, king of France and of Navarre, fourteenth of that name, I . . . do take possession of this country of Louisiana, the seas, harbors, ports, bays, straits, and all the nations, peoples, provinces, cities, towns, villages, mines, minerals, fisheries, streams, and rivers, within the extent of said Louisiana, from the mouth of the great river St. Louis, otherwise called the Ouabache [Ohio],

as also along the river Colbert, or Mississippi, and the rivers which discharge themselves therein, from its source beyond the country of the Sioux as far as its mouth at the sea, or Gulf of Mexico, and also to the mouth of the River of Palms, upon the assurance we have had from the natives of these countries, that we are the first Europeans who have descended or ascended the river



“ ‘ In the name of Louis the Great ’ ”

Colbert ; hereby protesting against all who may hereafter undertake to invade any or all of the aforesaid countries, peoples, or lands, to the prejudice of the rights of his Majesty, acquired by consent of the natives dwelling herein. . . .”

When he had ended, the men shouted *Vive le roi*, and fired off their guns. Then a cross was raised by the side

of the column, and in the ground at its foot was buried a leaden plate bearing the arms of France and the inscription *Ludovicus Magnus regnat* — “Louis the Great reigns.”

By his discovery of the mouth of the Mississippi, La Salle proved that ships from Europe might sail direct to the vast interior of the continent. He now hoped that by colonizing the valley of the Mississippi he might not only add a new empire to the crown of France, but acquire much wealth and great renown for himself.

The return up the river was fraught with trouble. Food was hard to find; the Indians were unfriendly; and when the voyagers were still a hundred leagues below the Illinois, La Salle was seized with a dangerous illness which continued for forty days. It was not until the end of September that he reached Fort Miamis, whither Tonty had preceded him by several weeks. He would have hastened on to Quebec and thence to France to tell his story to the king; but when he arrived by slow journeys at Mackinac, he found the season so far advanced that he did not think it wise to go farther.

LA SALLE'S LAST ENTERPRISE

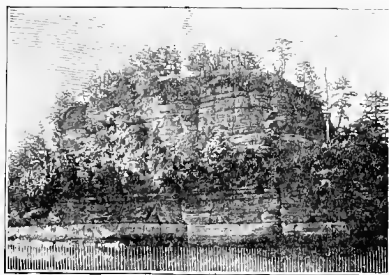
I. FORT ST. LOUIS ON THE ILLINOIS

WHILE waiting for the return of health and the passing of the long winter, La Salle was by no means idle. He now decided, with the help of his ever faithful friend Tonty, to establish a fort and colony on the Illinois that should serve as a rallying point for the friendly
1682 Indians and a defense against the raiding Iroquois. He had long had such a project in mind, and the time seemed favorable for putting it into execution. The fort would be the first of a chain of trading posts which he hoped to build from the Illinois country to the mouth of the Mississippi; by these all the trade of that region which he had named Louisiana would be controlled; and the furs and other products collected or procured from the natives could be shipped direct to France by way of the Gulf of Mexico.

The two friends resolved to begin their work without delay. Tonty, therefore, with a strong company of men and plentiful supplies, returned at once to the Great Rock on the Illinois River—the most suitable place for the building of a strong fortification and the establishment of a trading post. This rock or hill rises abruptly to the height of more than one hundred feet above the level of the plain around it. Its summit, which is about an acre

in extent, is somewhat level and can be reached only from one side, where a narrow pathway winds up from the wooded ravine below. On the side next to the river it overhangs the water, and the remaining sides are steep as castle walls. It is in itself a natural fortification.

As soon as Tonty and his men arrived at the spot, they began their work. They cleared the trees and shrubs from the summit of the rock, and leveled off a space for the inclosure; and when La Salle joined them, a few weeks later, all hands were engaged in building palisades and making intrenchments. Inside of the inclosure, storehouses and dwellings were put up, and at the corners blockhouses were built.



The Great Rock

This stronghold, La Salle named Fort St. Louis.

In the meanwhile, Indians belonging to various tribes had come and put up their huts on the plain within sight of the fort. They came for the protection which they knew the Frenchmen could give them in case of another raid by the Iroquois. They came also for trading purposes, for a trading post always had great attractions for the Indian. Here were soon gathered six thousand Illinois who had lately been scattered to the four winds by the destroying Iroquois. Hither also came Shawnees from the Wabash country, Miamis from Lake

Michigan, and Abenakis whose kinsmen lived in distant Maine. Within a few months it was estimated that four thousand warriors and more than twenty thousand persons were settled in the near neighborhood of Fort St. Louis.

II. THE LOST COLONY

Early in the following summer La Salle, leaving Tonty in command of the fort, started again to Canada. He had heard that a new governor had been appointed
1683 in place of Count Frontenac; and so he was not surprised to learn, before reaching Quebec, that all the privileges granted to him in the Northwest and on the Mississippi had been withdrawn. His enemies had triumphed, and now he must either give up all hope of success, or again lay his case before the king. He decided to do the latter, and so in the following November sailed for France.

King Louis XIV. listened with pleasure to the story of the discovery of Louisiana; and when La Salle proposed to found colonies in that vast region and to open direct communication between France and the Mississippi through the Gulf of Mexico, he gave the project his hearty approval.

Before midsummer, four ships were ready to sail with La Salle to the Louisiana country. Two hundred and
1684 eighty persons, including thirty gentlemen and a hundred soldiers, "mere wretched beggars soliciting alms," embarked on these vessels, ready to aid in the great enterprise and especially anxious to reap profit for themselves. There were six priests in the company—three Sulpicians and three Récollets—and among them

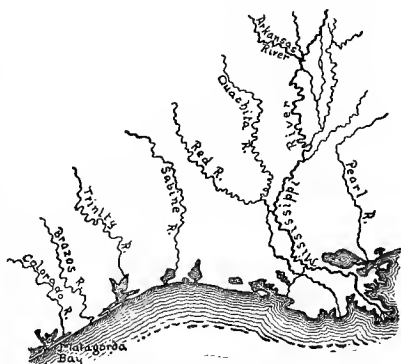
were Father Membré and La Salle's brother, the Abbé Cavelier. There were also on board of La Salle's ship two of his nephews, one of them only fourteen years of age.

The vessels sailed from Rochelle on the 24th of July. From the very first there were delays and disasters. One of the ships was captured by the Spanish; and it was not until the following January that the other three reached the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico. 1685

They could not find the mouth of the Mississippi, but sailed past it and finally landed on the Texan shore at a place now called Matagorda Bay.

A fort was built. La Salle took possession of all the adjoining country, and the arms of France were carved upon the forest trees. One of the ships returned to France, and the other two, while exploring the coast in a vain quest for the hidden river, were wrecked.

The colonists were in great distress and blamed La Salle for all



"They could not find the mouth of the Mississippi"

their misfortunes. Many were sick and all were suffering for the necessities of life. La Salle, in desperation, started with canoes to look for the Mississippi, but after four months returned, having lost a dozen of his men.

Late in the following April, he started northward with

twenty men, hoping to reach the Illinois Country by an overland journey through the wilderness. But this
1686 adventure also failed, and it was not long until, having used up all their powder, the company returned to the fort. They had suffered great hardships, and of those who had started out half had perished by the way.

Of the company that had sailed with La Salle from France, there were now only forty-five persons alive. These no longer hoped for aid from any quarter, either by land or by sea. All they could do was to persevere in the search for the Mississippi, and, having found it, to ascend it to the Illinois, where they would doubtless find friends.

III. THE END OF A GREAT LIFE

Early in January La Salle started again. In his company were his brother and one of his nephews, a faithful soldier Joutel, a Récollet priest, an adventurer named Duhaut, two Indians, and several others,—in all, fifteen men and a boy. Their course was toward the northeast, across vast plains where they encountered many bands of wandering Indians. Rains were frequent, the streams were swollen, and progress over the broken country was slow. Most of the men were discontented and mutinous, and even La Salle's nearest friends failed to give him the support which he needed. His nephew and an Indian who had always been faithful to him were murdered.

It was the middle of March when the party reached the stream in eastern Texas now known as the Trinity River. There the mutineers formed a plot to kill La Salle and lead

the expedition themselves. One morning Duhaut and another Frenchman, lurking in the tall prairie grass, waylaid the great explorer and shot him dead. They stripped the body and left it to be devoured by wild beasts.

Very soon the conspirators were quarreling among themselves. The two men who had murdered La Salle were slain. The others, seven in all, seized upon whatever they could, and then started westward to join the Indians and lead a savage life in the wilderness.

Those who were left placed themselves under the leadership of Joutel. They found three Indian guides who led them northeastward, through the Red River country, and finally to the Arkansas near its mouth. There, to their great surprise, they saw on an island a large cross, and near it a log hut. A moment later two Frenchmen issued from the hut and ran to welcome them.

Tonty, in his fort of St. Louis on the Illinois, had heard of La Salle's voyage and failure, and a year ago had set out with twenty-five white men and eleven Indians to find him. He had reached the mouth of the Mississippi, and had searched for thirty leagues on either side, but without seeing any signs of the lost colony. In despair he had turned back, but at the mouth of the Arkansas he had decided to leave six men, in the hope that they might there hear some news through the Indians who often passed that way from the Gulf. It was two of these men that now welcomed the wanderers to their hut on the island.

Summer had gone and the autumn frosts had begun to fall when Joutel and his party reached Fort St. Louis. Tonty was not there at the time, having gone on a visit to Canada,

but they were received by his lieutenant, and there they remained several days. Strange to say, they did not tell of La Salle's death, but declared that he was well and was even then on his way to join them. They met Tonty at Fort Miamis, and deceived him with the same story. Indeed, it was not till they had reached France that the Abbé Cavelier told the truth about his brother's tragic fate.

The king was busy with his own affairs, and took no steps to find the colony at Matagorda Bay and relieve the few sufferers whom La Salle had left behind. It is thought that they soon afterward perished at the hands of marauding Indians. But the faithful Tonty, when at last the story of La Salle's death was known to him, started without delay in search of the lost colonists.

It was early in December when, with eight men, he left the Illinois country and began to descend the Mississippi. In the following March he reached the
1689 Red River region, where six of his men deserted him and he lost all his powder. Under these circumstances it was plainly impossible for him to go farther, and so with aching heart he returned to Fort St. Louis.

About twelve months later he was pleased to receive from the king a royal grant of the region adjoining the fort; and there he lived for several years, trading with the Indians and sending canoe loads of furs every spring to Canada. In 1702, however, he was induced to join a new colony that was making a settlement near the mouth of the Mississippi. Fort St. Louis on the Illinois was abandoned, and Tonty's connection with the Old Northwest was ended.

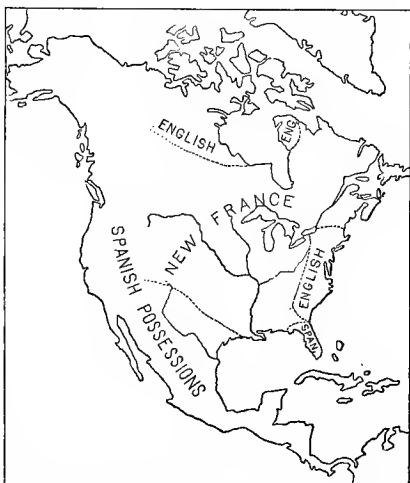
HOW THE FIRST SETTLEMENTS WERE MADE

FRENCH LIFE IN THE NORTHWEST

I. THE SETTLEMENTS

AT the close of the seventeenth century France was in possession, not only of Canada and the Great Lakes, but also of the entire valley of the Mississippi and the unexplored country beyond. By looking at the map you can see how large a portion of the continent this was.

The French people claimed that this vast region was theirs by right of discovery. They had been the first to navigate the Great Lakes, the first to explore the numer-



" At the close of the seventeenth century "

ous rivers, the first to penetrate the mighty forests or make their way across the boundless prairies. Saint-

Lusson, at the Sault Sainte Marie, had made formal proclamation that all the lands adjoining the Great Lakes were under the dominion of France; and the Sieur de la Salle, at the mouth of the Mississippi, had taken possession of that river and its tributaries in the name of King Louis the Great. It would seem that no other European nation could show a better title to this fair country.

The discoveries of La Salle and his companions had aroused great interest both in Canada and in France. Wonderful stories were told of the beauty and fertility of the country between the lakes and the great river. It was described as a region of rare promise, where the climate was mild and bracing, where the woods and prairies were full of game and delicious wild fruits, and where men might live and enjoy the fullest freedom. Compared with the cold and sterile regions of Canada this land was indeed an earthly paradise.

These stories caused many people of the more adventurous sort to leave the older settlements on the St. Lawrence and make their way westward. Those who went to the Illinois country followed La Salle's route up the lakes and through the straits of Mackinac, and then southward to Fort Miamis at the mouth of St. Joseph River. From this point some passed on to the Illinois by way of the Kankakee, others crossed the lake to the Chicago River and then followed Marquette's old route down the Des Plaines.

Soon trading posts and missionary stations grew up in many places, and to these came other immigrants attracted by the glowing accounts that were given of that delightful country. In the last year of the century a Jesuit mission

was founded near the Mississippi, midway between the mouth of the Missouri and that of the Ohio.

To this place came the two priests, Jacques Gravier and Gabriel Marest, with a number of Indian converts from Marquette's old mission of Kaskaskia on the Illinois. They had fled thither to escape the marauding Iroquois; and on the banks of a small river, two miles from the Mississippi, they built a church with a cluster of huts around it, and began life anew. 1700

They called the place Kaskaskia, from their old home; and to the little river behind the village they gave the same name. Soon other Indians came, and French traders and woods rangers made their homes there; and thus the mission became the first permanent settlement in the Mississippi Valley. It was for a time the center of traffic up and down the great river, and the point from which many of the furs of the Northwest were shipped to the Gulf. When Charlevoix, a French traveler, visited the place in 1721, he found there a Jesuit college and about a hundred families of French people, besides a great number of dependent Indians.

There were settlements also at Cahokia, Prairie de Rocher, and other points on or near the Mississippi; but none of them was of so much importance as Kaskaskia. In the time of its greatest prosperity several hundred slaves were held there by their well-to-do owners; and Philippe Francis Renault brought two hundred miners there to search for precious metals and work in the lead mines on the opposite side of the Mississippi.

The Illinois Country, as it was called, was a part of the

Louisiana which La Salle had added to the domains of the French king. It included at first the region between the Ohio and the Great Lakes, and extended indefinitely along both sides of the great river. At a later period the name was restricted to the district nearest the Mississippi, while the region farther east was called the Wabash Country, and was for the most part under the jurisdiction of Canada.

But for half a century longer, in all the region east of the Wabash, and about the head waters of the Ohio, there was no attempt at settlement. The fear of the Iroquois prevented priest and trader alike from trespassing upon these great hunting grounds of the red man.

II. THE SETTLERS

It is interesting to learn how the French people in the Illinois Country lived in friendship with the savage tribes around them. The settlements were usually small villages on the edge of a prairie or in the heart of the woods. They were always near the bank of a river; for the water courses were the only roads, and the light canoes of the voyageurs were the only means of travel. There the French settlers lived like one large family, having for their rulers the village priest and the older men of the community.

The houses were built along a single narrow street, and so close together that the villagers could carry on their neighborly gossip, each from his own doorstep. These houses were made of a rude framework of corner posts,

studs, and cross ties, and were plastered, outside and in, with "cat and clay" — a kind of mortar, made of mud and mixed with straw and moss. Around each house was a picket fence; and the form of the dooryards and gardens was regulated by the village lawgivers.

Adjoining the village was a large inclosure, or "common field," for the free use of all the villagers. The size of this field depended upon the number of families in the settlement; it sometimes contained several hundred acres. It was divided into plots or allotments, one for each household; and the size of the plot was proportioned to the number of persons in the family. Each household attended to the cultivation of its own ground, and gathered its own harvest. And if any one should neglect to care for his plot, and let it become overgrown with weeds and thistles, he forfeited his right to any part of the common field and his ground was given to another.

Surrounding the common field was a large tract of cleared land that was used as a common pasture ground. In some cases there were thousands of acres in this tract, and yet no person was allowed to use any part of it except for the pasturage of his stock. When a new family came into the settlement, or a newly married couple began housekeeping, a small part of the pasture ground was taken into the common field, in order to give the new household its proper allotment.

The priest occupied the place of father to all the villagers, whether white or red. They confided all their troubles to him. He was their oracle in matters of learning as well as of religion. They obeyed his word as law.

The great business of all was fur trading and the care of their little plots of ground. The women kept their homes in order, tended their gardens, and helped with the plowing and the harvesting. The men were the protectors of the community. Some were soldiers, some were traders, but most were engaged in hunting and in gathering beaver skins and buffalo hides to be sold to the traders and finally sent to Europe.

The traders kept a small stock of French goods, laces, ribbons, and other articles, useful and ornamental, and these they exchanged for the products of the forest. The young men, as a rule, sought business and pleasure in the great woods. Some of them became *voyageurs*, or boatmen, in the service of the traders. In their light canoes they explored every rivulet and stream, and visited the distant tribes among the sources of the Mississippi and Missouri. Others took to the forest as woods rangers, or *coureurs de bois*, and became almost as wild as the Indians themselves. They wandered wherever their fancy led them, hunting game, trapping beavers, and trading with their dusky friends. Those who roamed in the lake regions built, here and there, small forts of logs and surrounded them with palisades. In one of these forts a company of two or three *coureurs* would remain for a few weeks and then leave it to be occupied by any one who might next come that way. A post of this kind was built at Detroit long before any permanent settlement was made there; and, scattered long distances apart, on the lake shore and in the heart of the wilderness, were many others.

The northern coureurs, when returning from the woods, resorted to Mackinac as their headquarters; or, loaded with beaver skins, they made their way to Montreal, where they conducted themselves in a manner that would have shamed a Mohawk or a Sioux. But the rangers of the Illinois Country were in the habit of returning once each year to their village homes. There they were welcomed with joy, balls and festivals were given in their honor, and old and young gathered around them to hear the story of their adventures.

Thus, in the heart of the wilderness, these French settlers passed their lives in the enjoyment of unbounded freedom. They delighted in amusements, and there were almost as many holidays as working days. Being a thousand miles from any center of civilization, they knew but little of what was taking place in the world. In their hearts they were devoted to their mother country; they believed that "France ruled the world, and, therefore, all must be right." Further than this they troubled themselves but little. They were contented and happy, and seldom allowed themselves to be annoyed by the perplexing cares of business.

They had no wish to subdue the wilderness, to hew down the forest, and make farms, and build roads, and bring civilization to their doors. To do this would be to change the modes of living that were so dear to them. It would destroy the fur trade, and then what would become of the traders, the voyageurs, and the coureurs de bois? These French settlers were not the kind of people to found colonies and build empires.

III. THE CHRISTIAN INDIANS

The Indians who had been converted by the missionaries lived in friendly intercourse with the French villagers. The Jesuit fathers had taught them many of the ways of civilized life. At Kaskaskia they learned to cultivate the ground with wooden plows. They had rude mills for grinding their grain, and these were sometimes run by horse power, sometimes by windmills. They, as well as the French, owned cattle and sheep; and they traded in horses which had been brought from the distant plains of Texas.

Father Marest, one of the founders of Kaskaskia, has left an interesting picture of life and manners among these half-civilized people. "The chase and war," he says, "are the sole occupations of the men, while the rest of the labor falls upon the women and girls. They are the persons who prepare the ground for sowing, do the cooking, pound the corn, build the wigwams, and carry them on their shoulders in their journeys.

"These wigwams are constructed of mats made of plaited reeds, which they have the skill to sew together in such a way that the rain cannot penetrate them when they are new.

"Besides these things, they occupy themselves in manufacturing articles from buffaloes' hair, and in making bands, belts, and sacks; for the buffaloes here are very different from our cattle in Europe. Besides having a large hump on the back by the shoulders, they are also entirely covered with a fine wool, which our Indians manu-

facture instead of that which they would procure from sheep.

"These Indians are very different from what they formerly were. Christianity has softened their savage customs, and their manners are now marked by a sweetness and purity which have induced some of the French to take their daughters in marriage."

IV. A DAY IN A FRENCH VILLAGE

It is to Father Marest that we are also indebted for a description of the daily routine of life among the converts and French settlers at Kaskaskia. At early dawn his pupils came to him in the church, where they had prayers and all joined in singing hymns. Then the Christians in the village met together to hear him say mass, — the women standing on one side of the room, the men on the other.

The French women were dressed in prettily colored jackets and short gowns of homemade woolen stuffs, or of French goods of finer texture. In summer most of them were barefooted, but in winter and on holidays they wore Indian moccasins gayly decorated with porcupine quills, shells, and colored beads. Instead of hats they wore bright-colored handkerchiefs interlaced with gay ribbons, and sometimes wreathed with flowers.

The men wore long vests drawn over their shirts, leg-



A villager

gins of buckskin or of coarse woolen cloth, and wooden clog shoes or moccasins of heavy leather. In winter they wrapped themselves in long overcoats with capes and hoods that could be drawn over their heads and thus serve for hats. In summer their heads were covered with blue handkerchiefs worn turbanlike as a protection from mosquitoes as well as from the rays of the sun.

After the morning devotions were over each person betook himself to whatever business or amusement was most necessary or congenial; and the priest went out to visit the sick, giving them medicine and consoling them in whatever way he could. In the afternoon those who chose to do so came again to the church to be taught the catechism. During the rest of the day the priest walked about the village, talking with old and young, and entering into sympathy with all their hopes and plans. In the evening the people would meet together again to chant the hymns of the church. This daily round of duty and devotion was often varied by the coming of holidays and festivals, and sometimes by occurrences of a sadder nature — death, or misfortune, or the threatened invasion of savage foes.



THE POSTS ON THE LAKES

I. MACKINAC

YEAR after year passed by, and there were few changes in the Old Northwest. The Indian tribes still occupied the woods and roamed freely over the prairies. The few French settlements were like scattered encampments in a land of strangers. A few new posts were now and then established—but not many. A shorter route to Canada was opened by way of the Wabash and the Maumee; and stockades were built at Ouiatenon on the Wabash, and at the portage where now stands the city of Fort Wayne. Unlicensed traders and *coureurs de bois* carried on a profitable business, not being restrained by fear of the law. Within a single year fifteen thousand skins and furs were gathered from the Wabash country and shipped down the Mississippi to the French ports on the Gulf.

Along the lakes the French had established several fortified posts. The oldest was that of Mackinac at Point St. Ignace, where Marquette had set up his mission among the vagabond Hurons many years before. Here was Fort Buade, surrounded by palisades and defended by a garrison of two hundred well-drilled soldiers, "the most athletic to be found in the New World." The French village contained sixty houses, built along a single straight street,

and not far away were the long houses of the Hurons, precisely like those seen by Cartier at Hochelaga.

Mackinac was the chief resort of all the fur traders and voyageurs in the region of the lakes; and at certain seasons thousands of Indians assembled there from the West and South. They came not only to trade with the French, but to catch fish; "for," says Father Marest, "during the greater part of the year one sees nothing but fish."

There were other posts on the lakes, at Green Bay, at the River St. Joseph, and at the Sault Sainte Marie; and there was a stockade at or near Chicago. At each of these posts there were a commander or governor, a Jesuit missionary, a few soldiers, and several traders. There was a fort with a chapel, and at a little distance were the wigwams of the friendly Indians. Next to Mackinac, the post at Green Bay was for a long time the most flourishing. It was a favorite market for furs, buffalo hides, and corn, which the Indians sold to the traders who came hither both from Canada and from the Illinois Country.

II. DETROIT

The most famous of all the commandants who from time to time had charge of the post at Mackinac was a French captain named La Motte Cadillac. He it was who first saw the importance of a fort or settlement on the *détroit*, or strait, between Lake Huron and Lake Erie. This strait, he said, was the key to the upper lakes and the fur-producing regions around them. It

was through this strait that the Iroquois sent their canoe parties to the rich hunting grounds of the North. It was through this strait also that the English east of the Alleghanies had but lately been trying secretly to open a trade with the Indians of the upper lakes. If a strong fort were built on its shore, both the English and the Iroquois would be held in check.

La Motte's plans were received with favor by the French colonial minister, and he was commissioned to carry them into effect. On one of the last days in July in the first year of the new century, he 1701 took possession of the site where now stands the city of Detroit. He had with him fifty soldiers and fifty traders and artisans, besides two priests — one a Récollet friar to minister to the troops, the other a Jesuit father to preach to the Indians.

The fort, which he built close by the water's edge, was merely a strong stockade of wooden pickets with a small blockhouse at each corner. Within the inclosure several houses made of logs and thatched with grass were soon in readiness for the officers and soldiers. La Motte called his fortress Fort Pontchartrain, in honor of the colonial minister; but in history it is generally known as Fort Detroit.

In a short time many Indians began to build villages above and below the fort, looking to La Motte for protection against the Iroquois. The Hurons, of whom there were but few, came from Mackinac; several bands of Miamis came from the eastern shore of Lake Michigan; and the Ottawas at Mackinac secretly sent La Motte a

necklace to let him know that they also would come when they had gathered their harvest. All these had suffered much, in times past, from the cruelties of the Iroquois, who had driven them from their homes and slaughtered their bravest warriors; and they still lived in constant dread of these unpitying and powerful foes. Cadillac advised them to "weep their dead, and leave them to sleep coldly until the day of vengeance should come;" and he promised that he would help them sweep the land of their enemies.

THE FIREBRANDS OF THE WEST

I. THE FIGHT AT DETROIT

IN the ancient country of the Winnebagoes, in eastern Wisconsin, many alien tribes and bands of Indians had made their homes. Among these were the Sacs, the Kickapoos, the Miamis, and the Mascoutins. Within recent years the Miamis had emigrated to the country south and east of Lake Michigan, and their places had been taken by a fierce and restless nation called Outagamis, or Foxes. They were distantly related to the Iroquois, and resembled them in many of their ways. They were the firebrands of the Northwest, always ready to follow the warpath, and eager to carry death and destruction among their foes. They looked upon the Jesuit missionaries with distrust, and felt but little friendliness toward the French. But they were on the best of terms with their Iroquois kinsmen; and messages of peace and good will were often sent back and forth between the two nations.



One of the
"firebrands"

In the autumn of 1710, some Iroquois scouts made

their way through the wilderness and appeared in the country of the Foxes. They brought news of much interest from the East. A war, they said, had actually begun between the English and the French; but just what it was about they could not tell. The Iroquois would take sides with the English, as they had done heretofore; and they hoped that their kinsmen, the Foxes, would do the same and help to drive the hated French out of the country.



Strings of
wampum

Much more was said by these messengers. They gave to the Fox chiefs long strings of wampum from Dutch and English traders in New York, and told them how anxious the English were to buy furs from the Indians of the Northwest, and how they would give them more firewater and better goods than the French had ever given. Just what else was said, we do not know; but it was believed that a secret treaty was made between the Foxes and the Iroquois, for the Fox warriors were always eager for the warpath.

In the spring of the following year a fleet of canoes put out from Green Bay, crossed the foot of Lake Michigan, skulked along the southern shore of the strait of Mackinac, and then turned southward toward Detroit. These canoes bore the flower of the Fox nation—the wisest chiefs, the bravest warriors, and more than seven hundred women and children. There were also several Menominees and Sacs in the company, friends and neighbors of the Foxes, all eager for any adventure that called for bravery and held out the promise of plunder.

One day, late in April, this great array of savages suddenly appeared before the fort at Detroit. It is not certain that they had any evil intentions against the French at that point. On the contrary, it is ¹⁷¹¹ reasonable to suppose that they were not yet ready to begin hostilities; for it was not the custom of Indians to take their women and children with them upon the war-path. But they pitched their camp within fifty paces of the fort and began to build around it a rude bulwark of trees and brush and palisades.

In the fort at that time there were no French soldiers; but the place was held by thirty voyageurs and coureurs de bois under a certain M. Du Buisson, who had succeeded Cadillac as commandant of the post. It was but a small force to contend with so many savages; for all the Hurons, Ottawas, and other friendly Indians who dwelt near by were away on their great annual hunt, and their wigwams by the riverside were empty.



When Du Buisson asked the Foxes why they had come and what were their wishes, they at

“They killed the chickens”

first answered that La Motte Cadillac, the founder of the post, had invited them, as he had invited the Hurons and the Ottawas, to come and make their homes in the shadow of the fort. But Du Buisson felt sure that they meant

mischief, and inquired why they were building a barricade around their camp. The Foxes then became insolent and declared that, since the country was really their own, they had a right to do as they pleased.

Matters grew worse every day. The Foxes killed the chickens and pigeons belonging to the French, swaggered into the fort itself, and made bloody threats against its inmates. Du Buisson at last became thoroughly alarmed, and sent out messengers to summon his Indian allies.

In the meanwhile seven or eight French traders under the *Sieur de Vincennes* happened to come in from the West; but so few men could give but little aid in so great a crisis. Within a week, however, Hurons, Ottawas, Potawatommies, and even some Chippewas came hurrying to the relief of the fort. "Father," they cried, "behold, thy children compass thee round. We will, if need be, gladly die for our father—only take care of our wives and our children, and spread a little grass over our bodies to protect them."

The Foxes were taken by surprise. They hastily withdrew into their camp and made ready to defend themselves behind their rude intrenchments. They were at once surrounded by their foes, who outnumbered them four to one.

Du Buisson urged his allies to spare the lives of the Foxes, and be content with driving them back to their own country. But the Hurons would not listen to him. They had always hated the Foxes with the bitterest hatred, and now they thirsted for their blood. They declared that they would have vengeance for the injuries they had suffered

from the Fox nation, and threatened to attack the fort itself if Du Buisson would not help them.

The beleaguered Foxes defended themselves bravely in their palisaded camp. Their enemies watched them from every side, and fired upon them day and night, but dared not make an assault. There was no water in the camp, and the Foxes with their women were soon without food. Yet they held out bravely for nineteen days.

At last, almost dying with hunger and thirst, they called out to Du Buisson and offered to surrender if he would draw off his Indian allies and allow the starving Foxes to seek food for their women and children. The answer was given by the savage Hurons: "We see plainly that you mean only to deceive our father. If we should leave him as you wish, you would fall upon him and kill him. The English have sent you here to cut our father's throat and give this country to them. But we shall see who is master." And they began to fire at them again.

In despair and great rage, the Foxes resolved now to defend themselves to the last. They shot blazing arrows over the palisades of the fort upon the grass-thatched roofs of the buildings within. Some of the houses were soon in flames; and it was only by covering the rest of the roofs with hides that any part of the fort was saved from this rain of fire.

The French themselves were now in hard straits, for most of their stores had been destroyed, and their ammunition was running low. The Hurons and Ottawas were also discouraged, and declared that they would give up the fight and return to their hunting, for the Foxes could never

be taken. The coureurs and voyageurs begged Du Buisson to abandon the fort and retreat to Mackinac. But the commandant called a council of his allies and made a speech which so aroused the pride of the Indian braves that they declared they would show him what they could do, and would dislodge the Foxes before the rising of another sun.

Night came on, very dark, with wind and a drenching rain. The Hurons and Ottawas gathered around their camp fires, singing their war songs, and dancing the war dance, and boasting of their deeds of blood. Then, at a given signal, all seized their weapons and, rushing out into the darkness, made a sudden onset from all sides upon the camp of the Foxes. They crashed through the brush piles, scaled the palisades, and with fearful yells leaped down among the wretched wigwams where they supposed their foes were sleeping.

But the Foxes were not there. They had stolen away under cover of the darkness, and were now hastening through the woods toward the north. At the earliest peep of day the Hurons and Ottawas were on their trail. The Frenchmen joined the pursuit, and before night the fugitives were overtaken and forced to stand at bay. Upon a little peninsula that juts out into Lake St. Clair the Foxes again intrenched themselves behind a hastily built barricade of brush and trees, and made another brave fight for life.

The French and their allies charged madly upon them, and were met with fierce resistance. On both sides of the barricade the ground was soon heaped with the dead and

the dying, and the allies were driven back with great loss. The French soldiers saw that some other plan must be adopted to drive the Foxes from their new stronghold. They hastily brought two small swivels from Detroit, and put up a battery that would command the whole front of the camp. Then French and Indians began the siege in savage earnest.

On the fourth day the Foxes, utterly worn out with hunger, announced to the besiegers that they would surrender and trust themselves to their mercy. The Hurons and Ottawas and the French coureurs rushed at once into the encampment and began a pitiless slaughter. They killed all the warriors who bore arms; the rest, including the women and children, they divided among themselves as slaves. On the following day all returned to Detroit, dragging their captives with them. For some time afterward the chief amusement of the victors was to torture, or otherwise put to death, four or five captive Foxes daily. Before the beginning of the autumn hunt all were slain.



“The chief amusement of the victors”

In this unfortunate expedition the Foxes lost more than two thousand of their tribe.

II. THE LITTLE HILL OF THE DEAD

But the firebrands were not yet wholly extinguished. There were still several scattered bands in the region west of Lake Michigan, and all these vowed to avenge the death of their kinsmen. They collected in the neighborhood of their old home in the valley of the Fox River, and began a ruthless warfare against all the tribes that were friendly to the French. Their warriors lay in wait at the portages and skulked along the rivers that were used as highways of travel to the west and south. They cut off for a time all communication between Canada and the Illinois Country, and filled the land with terror almost equal to that caused by the Iroquois.

To meet this new danger the governor of Canada made a fresh treaty with the friendly tribes of the lakes, and
1715 all united to destroy the common enemy. Eight hundred French and Indians were soon marching to the Fox River country under command of Captain de Louvigny. The Foxes, when they heard of their coming, collected all their warriors at a place since called the Petit Butte des Morts (Little Hill of the Dead), not far from the present town of Neenah, where they shut themselves up in a camp surrounded by three rows of strong palisades. In this camp five hundred fighting men and nearly three thousand women and children awaited the approach of their foes.

It was not until late in the following summer that Louvigny arrived with his rabble of soldiers, *coureurs de bois*, and Indian allies. When he saw how strongly the

Foxes had intrenched themselves, he feared to make a direct attack upon them, and began to open trenches around the camp. By this means he was able on the fourth day to approach within twenty-five yards of the outer palisade. The Foxes bravely defended themselves, the women fighting as furiously as the men. But just as Louvigny was getting ready to undermine the palisades they sent word that if the French would make a treaty of peace with them they would surrender. 1716

A council was held and the whole matter was soon settled. The Foxes agreed to cede their country to the French; to pay, in furs, the expenses of the war; to give up all their prisoners; and to deliver to the allied Hurons, Ottawas, and Pottawatomies one slave for every captive that had perished while in their hands. These slaves were to be obtained by making war upon the Pawnees and other distant nations.

Louvigny soon afterward returned to Canada, taking with him six young chiefs as hostages for the faithful performance of the treaty.

The Foxes gave no more trouble for some time, but they neglected to send either the furs or the slaves which they had promised. The French still distrusted them, and for a long time it was thought unsafe for any one to go from the lakes to the Illinois Country without the protection of a strong guard. Communication between Canada and the Mississippi was carried on with much difficulty, and the trade in furs was obstructed, to the great loss of all who were connected with it.

III. THE QUENCHING OF THE FIREBRANDS

For several years the restless Foxes contrived to keep a nominal peace with the French and with their Indian neighbors. At length, however, an incident
1726 occurred that involved them in another war and brought upon them even greater misfortunes than before. It chanced that one of their chiefs, while out on a marauding expedition, was captured by the Illinois and burned at the stake. This aroused the fury of the Foxes; they gathered their warriors together, made an attack upon the Illinois, and drove them to seek refuge on the rock where Fort St. Louis, built by La Salle and Tonty, had once stood. There was no help for the Illinois, and the Foxes might have kept them hemmed in until they starved; but the latter feared the vengeance of the French, and after a few days skulked away, allowing their enemies to escape.

When the news of this incident reached France, everybody blamed the Foxes and said that there could be no safety in the Illinois Country until these firebrands were utterly extinguished; and it was announced that the king would handsomely reward any officer who would destroy them. But the French traders of the Northwest knew that this would not be an easy thing to do. "To try to exterminate them and fail would be disastrous," they said.

It was not until two years had passed that any direct movement was made against them. Finally, in the early summer, a great flotilla of canoes, carrying five hundred French soldiers and a thousand Indians, under the Sieur

de Lignery, set out for the Green Bay region. They paddled up the Fox River, but found all the country deserted. They could do nothing but burn the villages and destroy the cornfields. At one place ¹⁷²⁸ they found three squaws and an old man cowering with fear among the deserted wigwams. The women were taken as slaves by the allies, and the old man was roasted to death. Having passed Lake Winnebago, they came to the last stronghold of the Foxes, on the banks of a small tributary to the Wisconsin. But they found no one there; and so, after burning their houses and destroying their fields of corn, they turned about and paddled back to Mackinac, whence Lignery and his soldiers soon returned to Montreal.

At different times after this, other expeditions were sent out against the Foxes. Every man's hand seemed against them, and both French and Indians were bent upon their destruction. Even the Iroquois joined their former enemies in a war party that was organized to make an end of the poor Foxes. Thus hunted and betrayed, these unfortunate people sought refuge in vain among the hills and woods of their native country. In 1736 they could muster only sixty or seventy warriors, besides two hundred or three hundred women and children. They were no longer strong enough to call themselves a nation; and so, leaving their old homes, they joined themselves with their friends and neighbors, the Sacs, whose hunting grounds lay along the banks of the Mississippi below the mouth of the Wisconsin.

AFTER WORD

TWO hundred years had passed since Jacques Cartier had sailed up the St. Lawrence and from the summit of Mont Royal had gazed inquiringly toward the west, trying in vain to probe the secrets that lay hidden just beyond the horizon. One hundred years had elapsed since Jean Nicolet, coasting the lakes in his Indian canoe, had made the first white man's visit to the shores of Wisconsin and Michigan. It was more than fifty years since La Salle had given the vast province of Louisiana to France. And yet how little had the French done toward developing the resources of their possessions! A few feeble settlements here and there in the ancient forest, a few trading posts for traffic with the Indians, a few clumsy boats and bark canoes creeping along the waterways,—these were all that they could show as the results of a century of occupation.

There is no knowing how long things might have gone on in the same slow, easy fashion had not events happened to change the whole current of American history. It was not the wish of the French king to build up a new empire in America,—far from it. The colonies were maintained not for the benefit of the people, but to increase the king's

revenues and enrich the king's officers and favorites. In everything that was done, the interests of France were carefully considered, and the interests of Canada or of Louisiana, of the Illinois country or of the lake region, were as carefully ignored.

Latterly very few families emigrated from France to America. The newcomers were for the most part single men, many of them soldiers, who were given their discharge and a year's pay on condition that they would become settlers at places named by the king. These settlers always remained Frenchmen. They looked up to the king as their great father and guardian who would provide whatever was necessary for their welfare. And the king favored them with an oversight that was indeed fatherly, although it was always so directed as to turn everything to his own advantage. He not only selected the places for them to go, but he made laws to keep them there. Their farms must be of such shape and size as he should dictate. They must never go very far from the settlement in which their lot was cast. They must not trade in furs without a permit from the government. If their young men strayed into woods and became hunters and trappers, they were declared outlaws. Thus the rank and file of the settlers were in much the same condition as the peasants in old France—they had no rights, but were so cheerful and so easily satisfied that they had no thought of claiming any. Those in the higher ranks of life—king's officers, soldiers, traders—were no less French than they. Their chief ambition was to reproduce in the new world the manners and modes of

thought of old France, to serve the king, and to enjoy whatever of good might come in their way.

Is it any wonder that the wilderness remained a wilderness?

But in both New France and the English colonies east of the Alleghanies, forces were at work which after many years would bring about great changes, put the country into the hands of new masters, and prepare the way for the upbuilding of mighty commonwealths and the development of boundless wealth in the regions so long covered with wild forests and unbroken prairies. In the very first years of the eighteenth century the English were beginning to look with covetous eyes toward the country of the lakes and the valley of the Mississippi. Dutch-English traders at Albany and Oswego were persuading the Iroquois to deed them their hunting grounds south of Lake Erie. Pennsylvania traders had visited the Ohio and were tampering with the Miami Indians whose homes were between that river and the head waters of the Maumee. The governor of Virginia was urging the English Lords of Trade to fortify the mountain passes of the Alleghanies and make settlements on the lakes. The proprietor of Carolina was planning to establish a colony on the banks of the Mississippi. English merchants were impatiently anxious to secure a part or all of the trade in furs with the western Indians—a trade which the French had heretofore monopolized at their pleasure. Sooner or later it would be decided whether France or England had the best right to the central portion of the continent, and especially to that part which we now know as

the Old Northwest. A struggle of half a century's duration had already begun ; but the question of the final occupation and destiny of the country was not to be settled until after a second struggle, shorter, but equally important in its results, had been brought to a close.

The story of these two struggles and of the winning of the Old Northwest for civilization and freedom must be reserved for another volume.

INDEX AND PRONOUNCING VOCABULARY

KEY TO PRONUNCIATION. — ā, ē, ī, ō, ū, *long*; ă, ě, ĭ, ǫ, ŭ, *short*; a, e, i, o, u, *obscure*; fār, lāst, çall, fāre; tērm; fōr; fōōd, bōōk; fūrl; g as in go; ŋ as in finger; th as in thin; ũ *French* u; ñ as in *French* en; ë as *French* eu.

ABENAKI (ăb e nă'kĭ) INDIANS, 231.

Accault (ăk kōl') accompanies Hennepin to the upper Mississippi, 202, 204-218.

Akamsea (ă kă'm'se a), 173.

Algonquins (ăl gŏn'kĭnz), 31, 49, 60, 88, 93, 105. See *Ottawa Indians*.

Alleghany (ăl'e gā nĭ) Mountains, 264.

Allegheny (ăl'e gĕn ĭ) River, 146.

Allouez (ăl lōō ā'), Claude, at Sault Ste. Marie, 147, 159; at St. Esprit, 146; at Green Bay, 150, 165, 176.

Allumettes (ăl lū mĕts'), Island of, 49, 60, 80.

Andastes (ăn dăs'tēz), 72, 73, 80.

Andiarocte (ăn dĭ a rŏk'tē), 103. See *Lake George*.

Anoka (a nŏ'kă), Minnesota, 210.

Arkansas (ăr'kan să) Indians, 173, 226.

Arkansas River, 173, 235.

Ashland, Wisconsin, 114.

BAIE DES PUANS (bă dă pŭ ān'), 89, 111, 127. See *Green Bay*.

Balboa (băl bŏ'ă), 45.

Bay de Noquet (bă dĕ nŏ'kĕt), 88.

Bay of the Fetids. See *Green Bay*.

Bazire (bă zĕr'), 173. See *Arkansas River*.

Beautiful River, The, 136. See *Ohio River*.

Brébeuf (bră bĕf'), Father, 85, 96, 106.

Brulé, Étienne (brŭ lă', ā tyĕn'), with Champlain, 35, 66; among Hurons, 37, 55, 70, 81; at Montreal Island, 40; discovers Lake Ontario, 73; on the Susquehanna, 80; probably meets Nicolet, 81; visits the Northwest, 82; his death, 83.

Buade (bü äd') Lake. See *Lake Buade*.

Buade, Louis de, 161. See *Frontenac*.

Buade River, 168. See *Mississippi River*.

Buffaloes, described by Marquette, 168; by La Salle, 186; hunted by Sioux, 212.

CADILLAC (kă dĕ yăk'), LA MOTTE, 248, 253.

Cahokia (kă hŏ'kĭ ä), 238.

California, Gulf of, 136, 167.

Calumet (kăl'ŭ mĕt), the, 171.

Canada (kan'a dă), 11, 76, 92, 121, 131. See *New France*.

Carhagonha (kăr hă gŏō'hă), 70, 74.

Carolina, proprietor of, 264.

Cartier (kăr tyă'), Jacques, 11, 24, 35, 68, 88, 132.

Cataraqui (kăt a ră kĕ'), 181.

Cavelier (kă ve lyă'), Abbé, 131, 132, 232, 235.

Cavelier, Robert. See *La Salle*.

Cayuga (kă yŏō'gă) Creek, 190.

- Cayugas, 29. See *Iroquois*.
 Champlain (shām plān'), Samuel de, early life, 24; founds Quebec, 28; goes against Iroquois, 32, 35, 65-74; at Quebec, 31, 32, 34, 38, 43, 56, 65, 74; at Montreal, 39, 132; in Paris, 47, 56; governor, 84; ascends Ottawa, 48, 65; at Three Rivers, 84, 94; death, 95.
 Charlevoix (shār lē vwā') in the North-west, 239.
 Chaudière (shō dyār'), cataract, 66.
 Chautauqua (shā tā'kwā) Lake, 140.
 Chequamegon (she kām'e gon) Bay, 141.
 Chicago (she ka'gō), 176; first habitation, 178.
 Chicago River, portage, 176, 186, 224.
 Chickasaw (chik'a sa) Bluff, 225.
 Chickasaws, 173.
 China, dreams of finding a route to, 25, 35, 45, 56, 67, 76, 82, 90, 101, 110, 118, 135.
 Chippewas (chīp'pe wāz), 82, 86, 100, 111, 147, 149, 254.
 Colbert (kōl bār'), prime minister, 126.
 Colbert River, 225. See *Mississippi*.
 Conception (kōh sēp sē ñn') River, 164. See *Mississippi*.
 Copper, in Superior region, 35, 82, 85, 121-123, 125, 129.
 Council, at Chief Tessouat's, 51; with Hurons, 74; with Winnebagoes, 91; with Mascoutins and Miamis, 165; with Illinois, 171; with Arkansas Indians, 174.
 Coulange (kōō lōnz'), Lake, 49.
 Courcelle (kōōr sēl'), Governor, 136.
 Coureurs de bois (kōō rēr dē bwā'), 150, 242.
 Crèveœur (krāv kēr'), 198. See *Fort Crèveœur*.
 Crown Point, 33.
 Cuyahoga (kīa hō'gā) River, 140.
 DABLON (dā blōn), CLAUDE, 149, 158, 165.
 Dakotas (dā kō'tāz), 92. See *Sioux*.
 Daniel (dān yēl'), Father, 85.
 Des Plaines (dā plān') River, 176, 178, 225.
 Detroit (dē troit'), first post at, 242; founded by Cadillac, 248; threatened by Fox Indians, 253-260.
 Detroit River, discovered, 128, 154, 192.
 Dollier (dōl yā'), Father, 129, 137, 153.
 Drainage Canal, 178.
 Du Buisson (dū bwē sōn'), 253.
 Du Gay (dū gī'), 202.
 Duhaut (dū hō'), 234.
 Duluth (dū lūth'), Daniel, on Lake Superior, 215; with Hennepin, 214, 216.
 Dutch-English traders, 252, 264.
 ENGLISH, in New York, 252, 264; in Virginia, 173; claims, 264.
 Erie (ē'ri), Lake. See *Lake Erie*.
 Esprit (ēs prē'), St., mission of. See *St. Esprit*.
 FALLS, of Ohio, 139; of Niagara, 138.
 "Father of Waters," 92. See *Mississippi*.
 Fetid Water, men of the, 88, 151. See *Winnebagoes*.
 Fire Nation, 93. See *Mascoutins*.
 Five Nations, the. See *Iroquois*.
 Fort Buade, 247. See *Mackinac*.
 Fort Crèveœur, 198, 218, 222.
 Fort Frontenac, 177, 182, 184, 217.
 Fort Miamis, 196, 201, 222.
 Fort Pontchartrain (pōn shār trān'), 249. See *Detroit*.
 Fort Prudhomme (prü dōm'), 226.
 Fort St. Louis on the Illinois, 229, 235, 236, 260.
 Fort Wayne, Indiana, 247.
 Fort William Henry, 104.
 Fox Indians, 165, 217, 251-260.
 Fox River, 89, 93, 128, 150, 165, 194, 216, 260.
 Franciscans, 56. See *Récollets*.
 French River, 61, 66, 86.
 French village, day in, 245.
 Frontenac (frōnt nāk'), Count, 161, 177, 181, 231.
 Fur trade, 28, 35, 39, 55, 57, 77, 109, 111, 112, 120, 121, 134, 181, 183, 194, 243, 247, 264.
 GALINÉE (gāl ī nā'), FATHER, 129, 137, 153.

- George, Lake, See *Lake George*.
 Georgian Bay, 67, 86, 94, 98, 107.
 Grand River, Canada, 129, 154.
 Gravier (grāv yā'), Jacques, 239.
 Great Manitoulin (mān i tōō'lin), 86.
 Green Bay, 88, 94, 110, 117, 127, 164, 193, 217, 221, 248, 252.
 Grenolle (grē nōl'), with Brulé, 82.
 Griffon, built, 191; voyage, 192; lost, 194, 201.
 Grasseilliers, Medard Chouart, Sieur de, (grōs ā yā', mē dār' shōō ar', sēr dē), 109-121, 125, 141.
 Guérin (gā rān'), Jean, 142, 145.
- HAMILTON (hām'il ton), Canada, 129.
 Hennepin (hēn'e pin), Father, at Fort Frontenac, 187; at Niagara, 188; in Illinois, 198, 202; on Mississippi, 204; a captive, 209; returns to Canada, 217.
 Henry IV. of France, 24.
 Hill, Little, of the Dead, 258.
 Hochelaga (ho shel ā'gā), 14, 68, 132, 248.
 Hodenosaunee (ho den o sō nā'). See *Iroquois*.
 Hudson River, 34, 89, 105, 140.
 Hudson's Bay Company, formation, 121.
 Huron, Lake. See *Lake Huron*.
 Hurons, homes, 30, 64, 68; as fur traders, 40, 57; war with Iroquois, 65-72, 106; kill Étienne Brulé, 83; treatment of missionaries, 97; dispersion, 106, 116, 140; in Wisconsin, 116, 143, 152; at St. Ignace, 156; at Detroit, 249.
- ILLINOIS (il ī noiz'), discovery, 94.
 Illinois country, 239, 260.
 Illinois Indians, 151, 163, 198, 218, 231, 260.
 Illinois River, 172, 197, 201, 218, 222.
 Indians, great change in modes of life, 146; at Sault Ste. Marie, 158; Christians, 244. See names of different nations or tribes.
 Irondequoit (ir ōn'de kwoit) Bay, 137.
 Iroquet (ē ro kā'), Ottawa chief, 38, 40.
 Iroquois (ir o kwoi'), country, 29; campaigns against, 31, 32, 35, 65-74; antipathy to French, 32, 38, 102, 112, 181; their treatment of other nations, 32, 92, 106, 115, 129, 156, 219, 222, 250; cruelty, 102, 105, 107, 137, 219, 223; disperse the Hurons, 106, 141; make peace with the French, 182; vengeance upon them promised, 250.
- JESUITS (jēz'ū its), missionaries, 96; Alouez, 146; Brébeuf, 85, 96; Dablon, 149; Daniel, 85, 96; Jogues, 99, 102, 105; Lalemant, 106; Marquette, 150, 163; Ménard, 141; Raymbault, 99; at Sault Ste. Marie, 127; at residence of Ste. Marie, 96; relations with the Sulpicians, 130, 137. See also names of individuals.
 Jogues (zhōg), Isaac, at Sault Ste. Marie, 99, 149; at Lake Superior, 114; captivity, 102-104; death, 105.
 Joliet (zhō lyā'), Louis, sent to Lake Superior, 126, 147; at Green Bay, 127; at Sault Ste. Marie, 158, 161; first to traverse Lake Erie, 128; meets La Salle, 129, 138, 154, 177, 183; recommended to Frontenac, 162; joins Marquette, 162; on the Wisconsin, 167; discovers the Mississippi, 168; returns to Canada, 175, 177.
 Joutel (zhōō tēl'), with La Salle, 234; at Fort St. Louis, 235.
- KANKAKEE (kān kā kē') RIVER, 197, 222, 225.
 Kaskaskia (kāś kāś'kyā) on the Illinois, 175.
 Kaskaskia on the Kaskaskia, 239, 244.
 Keweenaw (kē'wē nā), 114, 142.
 Kickapoos (kik'a pōōz), 165, 217, 220, 251.
- LA BELLE RIVIÈRE (lā bēl rīv yār'), 135. See *Ohio River*.
 La Buade (lā bū ād'), 168. See *Mississippi*.
 La Chine (lā shēn'), 133; La Salle's house at, 134, 136.
 Lachine Rapids, 25, 27, 40, 134, 177; view of, 42.

- Lacrosse (lă krōs'), Wisconsin, 206.
 Lake Buade, 209.
 Lake Champlain, discovered, 33, 102.
 Lake Coulonge, 49, 60, 66.
 Lake Erie, early reports of, 124; traversed by Joliet, 128; by La Salle, 140, 192; by Dollier and Galinée, 154; first ship on, 192.
 Lake George, discovery of, 102.
 Lake Huron, discovery of, 56-63; traversed by Brulé, 82; by Nicolet, 86; by Joliet, 128; by Dollier and Galinée, 154; by La Salle, 192. See *Mer Douce*.
 Lake Michigan, discovery of, 76-88; traversed by Nicolet, 94; by Grosseilliers and Radisson, 111; by Joliet, 127, 176; by Marquette, 179; by La Salle, 193, 195.
 Lake Nipissing, 66, 74.
 Lake of the Holy Sacrament, 103. See *Lake George*.
 Lake of the Two Mountains, 42.
 Lake Ontario, discovery of, 64-73; traversed by La Salle, 137; by Count Frontenac, 181; by La Salle and Tonty, 188.
 Lake Peoria, 198.
 Lake Pepin, 213.
 Lake St. Clair, discovery of, 128, 256.
 Lake St. Louis, 20, 40, 42, 135.
 Lake St. Peter, 102.
 Lake Simcoe, 72, 106.
 Lake Superior, discovery of, 101, 114; first exploration, 116-121; copper regions, 35, 82, 85, 121-123; missions on, 142, 148.
 Lake Tracy, 147. See *Lake Superior*.
 Lake Winnebago, 93, 165, 261.
 Lalemant (lă le măn'), Father, 106.
 La Motte Cadillac. See *Cadillac*.
 La Motte de Lussière (lūs syăr'), 188, 190.
 La Pointe (lă point'), 114, 119, 142, 147, 151. See *St. Esprit, Mission of*.
 La Salle (lă sāl'), Robert Cavelier, Sieur de, his youth, 131; comes to Canada, 132; at La Chine, 133; starts on an expedition, 137; meets Joliet, 129, 138, 154; probably discovers the Ohio, 139; his second enterprise, 185; at Cataragui, 182; with Frontenac, 183; commands Fort Frontenac, 184; in France, 186; honors and privileges granted to him, 184; gains aid of Tonty, 187; at Fort Frontenac, 188; builds the *Grifon*, 191; his enemies, 135, 185, 190, 199, 224, 235; voyage on Lake Erie, 193; on Lake Michigan, 195; down the Illinois, 197; at Crèvecoeur, 198-202; returns to Canada, 203; meets Tonty, 224; reaches the Mississippi, 225; takes possession of Louisiana, 227; returns to Illinois, 229; at Fort St. Louis, 230; in France, 232; voyage to found colony on the Mississippi, 232; on the Texan coast, 233; his last expedition, 234; death, 235; fate of his colony, 236.
 Le Caron (lē ka rôn'), Joseph, 57, 66, 70, 74, 76, 86, 128.
 Lewiston (lōō'is ton), 188.
 Lignery (lĕn yĕr ē'), 260.
 Louis XIV., 159, 187, 226, 227, 232.
 Louisiana (lōō ē zi ăn'ă), 227-229.
 Louisville (lōō'is vīl), Kentucky, 139.
 Louvigny (lōō vĕn yĕ'), 258.
 MACKINAC (măk'i nă), 127, 156, 162, 179, 193, 247.
 Mackinac Island, 87, 193.
 Manhattan (măn hăt'an), 105.
 Manitoulin (măn ī tōō'lin) Islands, 86, 156.
 Maps: part of Canada, showing the first approaches to the Old Northwest, 10; island of Montreal, 22; country of the Iroquois, 29; country of the Hurons, 64; Nicolet's route to Green Bay, 86; old Jesuit map of Lake Superior, 109; Joliet's route through the lakes, 124; Lake Erie and the Ohio, 140; Galinée's map of the lakes, 155; the Illinois River and its approaches, 195; North America at the close of the seventeenth century, 237.
 Marest (mă rĕ'), Gabriel, 239, 244, 245.
 Mascoutins (măś kōō'tinz), 93, 111, 165, 217, 251.

- Matagorda (măť a gôr'dă) Bay, 232, 236.
- Mattawa (măť a wă') River, 61, 66.
- Maumee (mă mē') River, 186.
- Membré (môn bră'), Zenobe, 192, 218, 226.
- Ménard, Réne, 141, 144.
- Menominees (me nôm'i nēz), 89, 164.
- Mer Douce (měr dōos) of the Hurons, 61, 66, 82, 87, 141, 156. See *Lake Huron*.
- Mesconsing (měs kôn sǎn'), 167. See *Wisconsin River*.
- Mexico, Gulf of, 174, 227, 230.
- Miamis (mī ăm'iz), 165, 166, 206, 217, 219, 223, 231, 251.
- Michigan (mish'i gan), 86.
- Michigan Lake. See *Lake Michigan*.
- Mille Lacs (mil lăk), 208.
- Minneapolis, Minnesota, 212.
- Minnesota, Hennepin in, 209-216.
- Mississippi River, heard of, by Nicolet, 92; visited by fleeing Hurons, 116; supposed to have been seen by Grosseilliers and Radisson, 117; intimations of, 124, 148, 151, 161, 162; discovered by Joliet and Marquette, 168-175; explored by Accault and Hennepin, 204-218; La Salle descends to its mouth, 222-229; he fails to reach it from the Gulf, 233; Tonty explores country on both sides, 235; colony near its mouth, 236; explored by voyageurs, 242; French settlements on, 239; early commerce, 239, 247.
- Missouri River, discovered by Joliet, 172; seen by La Salle, 225.
- Mohawks (mô'haks), 104, 106. See *Iroquois*.
- Montreal (mônt re ăl'), 11, 19, 132, 140, 155.
- Montreal, island of, 11, 22, 24, 30, 38, 40, 43, 45, 48, 55, 57, 64, 77, 84.
- Mont Royal (mônt rwă ăl'), 18, 22, 24, 38, 40, 46, 65.
- Muskingum (mūs kīng'gum) River, 140.
- NATCHEZ (năť'chez) INDIANS, 226.
- Neenah (nē'nă), Wisconsin, 258.
- New France, its products and industries, 39, 47, 112, 131; its extent, 273. See *Canada and Louisiana*.
- New York, Indians of, 29; English in, 181, 264.
- Niagara (nī ăg'a rā) Falls, heard by La Salle, 138; discovered by Hennepin, 189.
- Niagara River, 188.
- Nicolet (nik o lă') Jean, 76-95, 128, 165.
- Nipissing (nīp'i sīng) Lake. See *Lake Nipissing*.
- Nipissings, 53, 61, 66, 80, 83, 85.
- Northwest Passage. See *South Sea*.
- OHIO RIVER, intimations of, 135, 138; discovered by La Salle, 139; seen by Marquette, 172; its mouth passed by La Salle, 225; English traders on, 264.
- Ojibways (ō jīb'wāz), 147. See *Chippewas*.
- Old Northwest, first approach to, 11; gateway to, 21, 24, 43; unknown, 67; first white man's dwelling in, 115; first church in, 148; France takes formal possession of, 158; described by La Salle, 186; visited by Charlevoix, 239; wonderful stories of, 238; few changes in, during French rule, 247, 262; French life in, 237.
- Oneidas (ō nī'daz), 29. See *Iroquois*.
- Onondagas (ōn on dă'gaz), 29, 73. See *Iroquois*.
- "Onontio" (on ōn te ō'), Indian name for the governor of Canada, 182, 219.
- Ontario (on tǎ're ō) Lake. See *Lake Ontario*.
- Osage (ō sāj') River, 25. See *Missouri River*.
- Otchipwes (ōť'chīp waz), 82. See *Chippewas*.
- Otoiliacha (ōt o oo ă shă'), 67.
- Ottawa (ōť'a wă) Indians, 31, 35, 40, 45, 56, 77, 93, 94; original home of, 31, 49, 77; in Wisconsin, 116, 141, 142, 148, 152; at St. Ignace, 179; in Illinois, 198, 222; at Detroit, 249.

- Ottawa River, at Montreal, 11, 20, 40, 42; ascent of, 48, 59, 66; La Salle on, 135; route to the lakes, 129, 155.
- Ouabache (wä bāsh'), 225. See *Wabash River*.
- Owendats (wēn dāts'), 30. See *Hurons*.
- Ouiatenon (wē ā te nōn'), 247.
- Quinnepegs (wīn ne pēgz'), 85, 87, 89. See *Winnebagoes*.
- Outagamies (ōō'ta gā mēz), 251. See *Fox Indians*.
- PACIFIC OCEAN, efforts to find a passage to, 21, 35, 46, 67, 90, 93, 183. See *China*.
- Paris, the talk of, 46, 48.
- Pawnees, 259.
- Pekitanoui (pēk e tān wē'), 172. See *Missouri River*.
- Pennsylvania first entered by Brulé, 80; traders invade the Northwest, 264.
- Peoria (pē ō'ri a) Lake, 198.
- Pepin (pē'pin) Lake. See *Lake Pepin*.
- Peré (pa rā'), 126, 138, 147.
- Perrot (pēr ō'), Nicholas, 157.
- Petuns, 115. See *Tobacco Indians*.
- Pilgrims, landing of, 89.
- Pointe aux Barques (point ō bārķ), 128.
- Pottawattomies (pōt a wōt'a mīz), 94, 100, 111, 150, 254.
- Poualaks (pwā lāks'), 119. See *Sioux*.
- Prairie de Rocher (prā rē dē rō shā'), 239.
- Puans, Baie des (pū āh', bā dā). See *Green Bay*.
- QUEBEC (kwe bēk'), Champlain at, 28, 31, 32, 34, 38, 39, 43, 56, 65, 74; visited by Nicolet, 77; by Jogues, 101; Radisson and Grosseilliers, 111-113; Joliet, 117; La Salle, 231; Hurons, 107; Chippewas, 111.
- RADISSON (rād īs sōn'), PIERRE D'ESPRIT, SIEUR DE, 109-121, 125, 141.
- Rapids in the St. Lawrence, 25, 40, 111. See *Lachine Rapids*.
- Raymbault (rām bō'), Charles, 99, 149.
- Récollets (rā ko lā'), first missionaries to Canada, 56; with La Salle, 192, 232; entertained at Green Bay, 217, 221; with Cadillac, 249.
- Red River, 227, 235.
- Renault (rēn ō'), Philippe Francis, 239.
- Ribourde (re bōōrd'), Gabriel, 192, 202, 218, 220.
- Richelieu (rē shē lū') River, 36, 102.
- Rochester (rōch'es ter), New York, 137.
- Rock, the Great ("Starved Rock"), on the Illinois, 198, 203, 218, 222, 230, 260. See *Fort St. Louis*.
- Rum River, 210.
- SAC INDIANS, 145, 251, 261.
- Saginaw (sāg'ī nā) Bay, 128.
- St. Anthony, falls of, 212, 214.
- St. Anthony of Padua (pād'u ā), 205, 212.
- St. Clair Lake. See *Lake St. Clair*.
- St. Clair River, 128, 154.
- St. Croix (kroi) River, 118, 216.
- Ste. Marie (sānt ma rē'), residence of, 96-99, 108.
- Ste. Marie's River, 154.
- Ste. Marie, Sault. See *Sault Ste. Marie*.
- St. Esprit, mission of, 147, 149, 151, 152.
- St. Francis River, 210. See *Rum River*.
- St. Francis Xavier (zāv'ī ēr), mission of, 150, 165, 194, 217, 221. See *Green Bay*.
- St. Ignace (īg nās'), mission of, 156, 162, 179, 180, 193. See *Mackinac*.
- St. Joseph River, 179, 195, 222, 248.
- St. Lawrence River, 11, 24, 39, 50, 56, 102, 181; view of, 23.
- St. Louis Lake. See *Lake St. Louis*.
- St. Louis, Missouri, 172.
- Saint-Lusson (sān lūs sōn'), Sieur, 157, 237.
- St. Paul, Minnesota, 207, 213.
- Sault Sainte Marie (sōō sānt mā'rī), 86, 99, 110; view of, at present time, 100; mission at, 127, 142, 149, 153, 156; Saint-Lusson at, 157; trading post, 248.
- Savignon (sā vēm yōn'), 38, 41.

- Senecas (sĕn'e kâz), 29, 106, 135, 137. See *Iroquois*.
- Shawnees (shă'nĕz), 138, 172, 223, 231.
- Simcoe (sim'kō) Lake. See *Lake Simcoe*.
- Sioux (sōō) Indians, 116, 117, 145, 151, 162; visited by Grosseilliers and Radisson, 117; by Allouez, 149; capture Hennepin, 205-217.
- South Bend, Indiana, 197, 222.
- South Sea, dreams of finding a passage to, 21, 25, 35, 45, 46, 56, 67, 82, 85, 110, 127.
- Sulpicians (sŭl pish'ianz), 129, 131, 132, 137, 139, 155, 162, 232. See *Dollier* and *Galinée*.
- Superior Lake. See *Lake Superior*.
- Susquehanna (sŭs kwe hăn'nâ) River, 80.
- TABAGIE (tâ bâ'gĭ) at Chief Tessouat's, 51. See *Council*.
- Talon (tăl ôh'), Jean Baptiste, 125, 136, 157, 162.
- Tartars of Asia, 101, 118.
- Tennessee, 225.
- Tessouat (tĕs ōō ä'), Chief, 50, 60, 66, 80.
- Texas, La Salle's colony, 233; horses brought to Illinois, 244.
- Thousand Islands, 181.
- Three Rivers, 84, 94, 102, 110, 111, 149.
- Tobacco Indians, 115. See *Hurons*.
- Tonty (ton'tĕ), Henri, with La Salle, 187; at Niagara, 191; at Crèvecoeur, 201; adventures, 218; at Green Bay, 221; on the Mississippi, 225; tries to succor La Salle, 235; at Fort St. Louis, 236; in Louisiana, 236.
- Tracy Lake. See *Lake Superior*.
- Tracy, Marquis de, 147.
- Trent River, 72.
- Two Mountains, Lake of, 42.
- UTICA (ŭ'ti ka), Illinois, 178.
- VERMILION SEA, 136, 172. See *California*, *Gulf of*.
- Vignau (vĕn yō'), Nicholas, deceptive story, 44-55.
- Vincennes (vĭn sĕnz'), Sieur de, 254.
- Virginia, 89, 173, 264.
- Voyageurs (vwâ yâ zhĕrz'), 158, 242.
- WABASH (wă'băsh) COUNTRY, 240.
- Wabash River, 186, 225, 247.
- Wild Rice Indians, 164. See *Menominees*.
- Winnebagoes, 85, 87, 89, 90, 111, 251.
- Winnebago (wĭn e bā'gō) Lake. See *Lake Winnebago*.
- Wisconsin (wĭs kŏn'sĭn), 89, 141, 167, 251.
- Wisconsin River, 93, 110, 116, 143, 216.
- Wyandots (wĭ'an dŏts), 30. See *Hurons*.

